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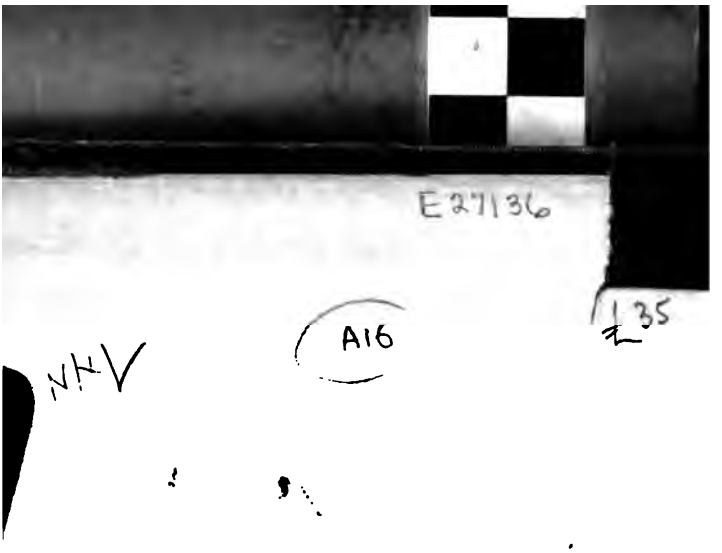

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WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA.

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS, ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON,

(Late) H.M.'s Consul for the Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po,
Author of "A Mission to Dahomey," "A Pilgrimage to
El Medinah and Meccah," &c.

LONDON:

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1865.

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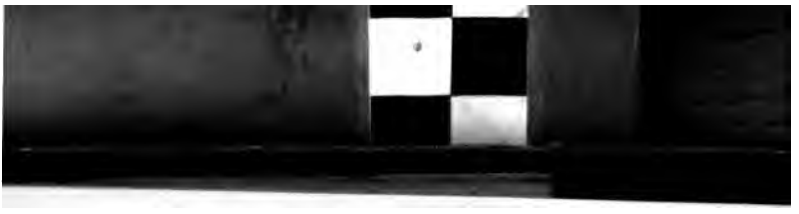

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TO

AN OLD AND VALUED FRIEND,

ADMIRAL THE HONOURABLE HENRY ANTHONY MURRAY,

(BACHELOR, D 4, ALBANY,)

THIS ATTEMPT

TO MAKE THE WEST AFRICAN DESCRIBE HIMSELF,

IS AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED,

BY

ONE OF HIS "RECLAIMED."

These Lines

WERE WRITTEN TWO YEARS AGO.
I LEAVE THEM A SORROWFUL MEMORIAL
OF THE DAYS THAT HAVE BEEN.

MOTTOES.

A proverb is the horse of conversation: when the conversation flags, a proverb revives it: proverbs and conversation follow each other.—YORUBA SAYING.

5. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.

6. To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.—PROVERBS, Chap. i.

The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.—PROVERBS, Chap. xxvii.

PREFACE.

An able linguist has remarked, that the highest object of language-study is to obtain an insight into the characters and thought-modes of mankind. This may be effected in two ways: firstly, by an accurate acquaintance with the verbal forms in which its ideas find utterance; secondly, by the investigation of its literary compositions.*

As regards the African tongues, too much labour has hitherto been lavished upon the adits and portals which lead to the temple of knowledge. Sir William Jones, in the last century, made the same complaint touching Asiatic dialects. The "true expression of the national spirit, containing the secrets of a race's mental organisation," and "revealing the origin of customs long forgotten," is not to be sought in accidence or in vocabulary. And they who maintain, as some have done, that "the

* The Rev. J. L. Döhne, Missionary to the American Board, C. F. M.—"A Zulu-Kafir Dictionary Etymologically Explained, with copious illustrations and examples, preceded by an introduction on the Zulu-Kafir Language."—Cape Town, 1857.

spirit of a nation is exhibited to our minds in the living words which have conveyed its ideas for ages, as clearly as its physical appearance is presented to our eyes," and that "thus the national language is the only safe exponent of the national character," have chosen, it appears to me, the more imperfect means of attaining the wished-for object.*

For Africa *has* an embryo literature, and hardly requires that one should be begotten by strangers, "for the propagation of Christian truth and the extension of civilisation." Some peoples, as the wild and pastoral tribes of the southern regions, have been said to be destitute of traditions. "The savage custom of going naked," we are told, "has denuded the mind, and destroyed all decorum in the language. Poetry there is none: the songs are mostly repetitions of a few hyperbolical expressions. There is no metre, no rhyme, nothing that interests or soothes the feelings, or arrests the passions; no admiration of the heavenly bodies, no taste for the beauties of creation. We miss the cultivated mind which delights in seizing on these objects, and embodying them in suitable words." Finally, the

* Humboldt, Pers. Narr. Chap. IX., remarks, "There are certain points in which idioms the most dissimilar concur one with another. That which is common in the intellectual organisation of man is reflected in the general structure of language; and every idiom, however barbarous it may appear, discloses a regulating principle which has presided at its formation."

massiveness and bulkiness of the languages,—which bear the stamp of the people who use them,—"has caused weakness in the intellect of the native."

But surely these opinions regarding the absence of oral literature, if the phrase be allowed, amongst the so-called Kafir races, are greatly exaggerated, if not wholly erroneous. The Rev. Mr. Moffat often refers to the fables and apologues of the Bachwanas (Bechuanas). "Les Bassoutous" (Basutu), says M. Casalis,* alluding to their proverbs, "me paraissent avoir été particulièrement heureux dans ce genre de composition. Leur langue, par sa précision énergique, se prête admirablement au style sententieux, et l'élément métaphorique est entrée si abondamment dans sa formation qu'on ne saurait la parler sans s'habituer insensiblement à revêtir ses penseés de quelque image qui les fixe dans la mémoire." As an instance of this metaphysical style, we find amongst his catalogue of Sisuto proverbs, "La pointe de l'aiguille doit passer la première;" meaning, "Be discreet in your discourse, avoid disguising the truth by evasive words."† This does not confirm Mr. Döhne's views.

Even if, however, Mr. Döhne's dictum be correct in the case of the Kafirs, it is distinctly not so when

* Études sur la langue Séchuana, par Eug. Casalis, Part III. p. 84.

† I should rather explain this by our kindred expression, "introduce the sharp edge of the wedge first;" or, as the West Africans say, "Softly! Softly caught the monkey."

applied to other African tribes, even to those of an inferior organisation, mental and physical.

Amongst the negroid races of the seaboard and the interior, MM. Dard and Koelle* have shown that there is a vernacular literature. The latter has transcribed a variety of "tales in the same language, and about the same words, in which they have been told over and over again, to beguile many an idle hour in a land where nature's richest bounties are obtained without almost any labour." He soon managed to collect a MS. of about 800 pages, which constituted a rich material for grammatical investigation, and of which he published a limited collection. And he justly remarks, that they present the student with the proper means of acquiring a correct and thorough acquaintance with the language. "Translations of books made by foreigners—for instance, the Bible—cannot fully answer this object; and even to tell a native English phrases for the purpose of having them translated into his own tongue, is a mode of proceeding not quite safe, inasmuch as it often places him in the temptation of adapting his own language to the English idiom: the whole peculiar cast and features of a language can be thoroughly learned only when we hear natives express their thoughts in their own mother-tongue." He includes in his work sketches of no little

* These authors will presently be more distinctly alluded to.

importance, depicting the two most powerful nations of Central Africa, the Bornuese and the Fulas, with the sensible observation, "that where all is still enveloped in so much darkness, any such sporadic glimpses of light become of great value." Of the fables, it can only be said that we recognise in them a specimen of that old-world literature which immortalised Æsop, and which enables the Panjatantra still to remain the text-book of Hindostan.

M. Koelle proceeds to a deduction, in which he would compel all to agree with him, by merely substituting the word "Negroid" for "Negro." The Bornuese, like the Wolof, are semi-Semites—they have the Koran and the Arab alphabet:* we may, therefore, expect to find a superiority in their compositions over those of the pure African. "It is hoped that the publication of these first specimens of Kanuri literature will prove useful in more than one way. Independently of the advantage it offers for a practical acquaintance with the language, it also introduces the reader to some extent into the inward world of Negro mind and Negro thoughts; and this is a circumstance of paramount importance, so long as there

* The Vai Syllabarium which, like the Cherokee alphabet, excited a nine-days' wonder in Europe, was the invention of a race cognate with the Mandenga, and who probably derived from the Koran the idea of writing their mother-tongue. They call the world "dunya" and a wife "namusi," which sufficiently shows their theology, and the source whence they drew the most important of their words.

are any who either flatly negative the question, or, at least, consider it still open, 'Whether the Negroes are a genuine portion of mankind or not.' It is vain to speculate on this question from mere anatomical facts, from peculiarities of the hair, or from the colour of the skin: if it is *mind* that distinguishes men from animals, the question cannot be decided without consulting the languages of the Negroes, for language gives the *expression* and the *manifestation* of the mind. Now, as the grammar proves that Negro languages are capable of expressing human thoughts — some of them, through their rich formal development, even with astonishing precision—so specimens of their 'Native Literature' show that the Negroes actually have thoughts to express; that they reflect and reason about things just as other men. Considered in such a point of view, such specimens may go a long way towards refuting the old-fashioned doctrine of an essential inequality of the Negroes with the rest of mankind, which now and then shows itself, not only in America, but also in Europe. Such views may, perhaps, be excusable in those who have never heard black men speak, except in a language foreign to them, and which they had to learn from mere hearing; but when I was amongst them in their native land, on the soil which the feet of their fathers have trod, and heard them deliver in their own native tongue stirring extempore speeches, adorned with beautiful

imagery, and of half-an-hour or an hour's duration; or when I was writing from their dictation, sometimes two hours in succession, without having to correct a word or alter a construction in twenty or thirty pages; or, when in Sierra Leone, I attended examinations of the sons of liberated slaves in Algebra, Geometry, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc.—then, I confess, any other idea never entered my mind but that I had to do with *real men.*"

Proceeding further South, we reach the Gold Coast, whose population is purely pagan, and which afforded the Ashante, Cormantyn, and "Guinea Niggers," once so well-known in Jamaica and in the Southern States of the American Union. M. Zimmermann has supplied us with specimens of proverbs, of historical composition, of the old stories of the Accra people, and of speeches delivered by the chiefs during the poll-tax disturbances, which occurred in January, 1854. About 3000 armed men, "protected" by Great Britain, assembled at night, sometimes near, at other times under the guns of our forts. The people having formed a large circle, with the Caboceers, headmen, captains, and speakers in advance, and having saluted one another in due form, chose their speakers and witnesses to accompany them to the several groups, and delivered orations of a Hibernian and repeal tendency, which the Reverend Reporter transcribes with evident zest. We have also a specimen of a Ga-fable:

"Spider and Spider-son and three Ghosts,"—the spider, who is supposed to have created the first man, being therein brought to shame.* Then follow Lalai, or songs, which are, however, mere tautologies. The author remarks, "Short Ga-songs are composed at random during plays and processions, dances and labours. They are often witty and satirical; but we are still too little acquainted with this part of the language to have a sure footing as to metre, time, ellipses, and other points. Proverbs and fables or tales, which already exist by hundreds and even thousands, are also continually produced by young and old.† But it is also difficult, especially with the latter, by which many a moonlight night is occupied, to get them correctly—their style and spirit partly expressed by theatrical changes of voice, by songs, by imitations of noises and interjections, are, as in the case of the speeches, generally lost in writing them down. Respecting the proverbs, it is to be remarked, that though they form as it were the expression of the law and manners of the country, they appear often very

* Of these Anansesem, or spider-stories, more in a future page. Bosman (Description of Guinea, Letter 17) is my authority for asserting that the Gold-Coast people believe the first men to have been made by the spider. M. Zimmermann speaks of it rather as a popular demon than a creator.

† There are men at Accra, Mr. Addo of the British hotel, for instance, who have a *répertoire* almost as copious as the Arabian Nights, and to which Europeans listen with curiosity and wonder, if not with admiration.

ambiguous, and allow not only a bad, but often also an unclean use."*

Still advancing eastward, we enter the land of Yoruba, of which it will be remembered Dahome and Benin form part.† "It would seem," said the good and learned Bishop Vidal,‡ "that there is scarcely an object presented to the eye, scarcely an idea excited in the mind, but it is accompanied by some sententious aphorism, founded on a close observance of men and manners, and, in many cases, of a decidedly moral tendency. It is true

* Perhaps the worst of the whole are the songs, which are mere repetitions. The hymns and spiritual pieces, translated by Catechists, bear the impress of want of power. The two following were extemporised by Krobo children after the first fruits of the tribe had been baptised, and the second alludes to that event. They are sung, we are told, to a very sweet tune.

1.

It is God's first born
Who died ! oh !
This is what grieves us "too much !"
He will come ! oh !
Oh yes ! oh yes ! my friend !

2.

People come, but people come not yet ! oh !
To-day, when our Father has not yet come !
Yea ! yea ! yea ! my friend !

Which is somewhat like the improvisation by Mr. Theodore Hook.

† A few specimens of Dahomian sayings will be offered to the reader. Benin is not behind her sister provinces in tale and tradition, but my stay in that city was too short to make collections.

‡ Introduction to Mr. Crowther's Yoruba Grammar.

that this concise and pointed method of speech is, in a degree, common to all nations amongst whom civilisation has made but little progress; for, as has been justly remarked, 'proverbial expressions are peculiarly adapted to a rude state of society, and more likely to produce effect than any other; for they profess not to dispute but to command; not to persuade, but to compel: they conduct men, not by circuitous argument, but immediately to the approbation and practice of integrity and virtue.' In the Yoruba, however, there is an extraordinary exuberance of these sententious sayings, not confined to any particular caste, undertaking to be the guide of the rest; but everywhere in the mouths of all, imparting a character to common conversation, and marking out a people of more than ordinary shrewdness, intelligence, and discernment. If brevity and elegance be regarded as the two main excellences of a proverb, the Yoruban aphorisms may claim an equal rank with those of any other nation in ancient or modern times; for besides the condensation of the discriminating sentiment into a small compass,—which is always observable in them,—there is, for the most part, also an almost poetical contrivance or construction of the parts, which marks a refinement of taste greater than we should naturally have expected." *

"I believe that the number and the character of these

* I hardly think that the Bishop ever could have compared the Yoruban with the Arab or Persian proverbs.

proverbial sayings will almost bear us out in calling them the national poetry of the Yorubas. I am not aware of the existence amongst them of any heroic pieces, or war and hunting songs, such as those which prevail amongst the southern tribes, and of which Casalis has given us several remarkable specimens. The poetry of the Yorubas, if I may call it such, seems rather to be of the didactic kind, probably evincing a different character of mind in the people, and which cannot fail, I think, to remind us, both in sentiment and style, of some of the poetical books of Scripture."

The Bishop then proceeds to point out a characteristic which he believes gives the proverbs of Yoruba their peculiar claim to be considered a national didactic poetry. It is the same feature which Bishop Lowth considered one of the grand characteristics of, and which Bishop Jebb proved to be the sole distinctive characteristic of, the Hebrew poetry,—the system of parallelism.* After

* "Denoting a certain equality or resemblance between the members of each period, so that in two lines, or members, of the same period, things shall answer to things and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of rule or measure."

With diffidence, due when differing in opinion with three bishops, I venture to remark, that in the Semitic dialects, and in other than Asiatic and Indo-European tongues,—as the Persian,—which imitate their style, the habit of balancing sentences naturally produces this parallelism. And I believe that the Thousand and One Nights would supply as many instances as can be found in the Hebrew poets.

In another point I can hardly agree with the learned Mr. Vidal,

adding instances of the gradational, the antithetic, and the introverted, he concludes, "Such is the striking feature of parallelism which so evidently characterises the Yoruba proverbs. It is this which gives them their claim to the title of poetry; for there does not appear to be anything which can be strictly called rhythm or metre in any of them; although the feature which I am about to notice may be regarded as a slight approximation to it. I mean, that there is in the main a conformity of length between the lines which are designed to be parallel or antithetic; and that where there is a third line, either preceding or following, which stands alone, it is of a different length from the others, and, in most cases, considerably longer. These stanzas, if we may call them so, of three lines,*

viz., that the Yoruba must be excluded from the extensive alliteral family of languages,—*e.g.*, Congo, Damara, Sichwana, and Kafir,—which occupies the whole of Africa south of the equator. The distinguishing points of the Hamitic tongues are these. 1. The root is a consonant, followed by a vowel—monosyllabic, as opposed to the biliteral Semitic,—so that vowels do not initiate roots, nor do consonants, except liquids and nasals, terminate them. 2. An inordinate reduplication and combination to assist the roots, whose simplicity demands some such aid. 3. The distinction, not of gender, but of the personal and the impersonal, the animate and the inanimate. 4. Negation in the verb by a negative voice. 5. The absence of a passive voice. 6. The peculiar and artificial system of euphony. 7 and final, The change of words at the beginning instead of at the end of the vocable, where performatives or affixes take the place of the Aryan suffixes. Tried by these tests, the Yoruba clearly belongs to the trans Sahara family.

* The characteristic of the indigenous Sindhi poetry is the stanza of three lines, the third numbering two or more feet than the first

are of very frequent occurrence amongst the Yoruba proverbs, and the peculiarity just noticed will, I think, be found to prevail almost universally in them."

I will conclude this portion of the subject with extracting two passages from the Introduction above quoted.

"I must not omit to mention, in this brief account of the Yoruba proverbs, that there is a degree of moral light observable in them which renders them peculiarly interesting, and gives them, I may add, a real value in connection with the inquiry into the moral government of the universe; inasmuch as it presents us with a lively comment on the words of St. Paul concerning the Gentiles, 'which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' (Rom. ii. 15.) These proverbs, in many instances, display ideas concerning the providence of God, the moral rectitude of actions, or the practice of social virtues, which (to say the least) we should hardly have expected to find in a people so wholly separated from the influences, direct or indirect, of that revelation which God was pleased to make of Himself to man.* The

and second. I have quoted many instances of this peculiarity in "A History of Sindh."

* I believe, on the contrary, that the whole of Yoruba shows more or less the effects of El Islam. With respect to the Kafirs,

words of Casalis, with reference to the Sisuto proverbs, are, in my opinion, even more applicable to those of the Yorubas. 'Sous le rapport moral, il est intéressant d'observer les vestiges de cette conscience universelle, à laquelle Dieu a confié la direction de toute créature intelligente. Nous acquérons par là la certitude qu'il n'est pas d'homme sur la terre qui ne sache discerner entre ce qui est moralement bon et moralement mauvais, et qui par conséquent en soit susceptible d'encourir la condamnation attachée à la transgression des lois divines.' Amongst his list of Sisuto proverbs, we meet with some that express a moral sentiment; as, for example, 'La trappe prend le grand oiseau aussi bien que le petit;' 'Le sang humain est pesant, il empêche celui qui l'a répandu de fuir;' 'Le meurtrier dit, Je n'ai tué qu'une bête, mais l'animal sans poil (l'homme) ne périt pas sans être vengé;' 'L'homme trompeur est une aiguille à deux pointes.' But there is something more striking in the high standard of morality observable in the sayings of the Yorubas, displaying as it does a conscious recognition of the intrinsic excellence of those peculiar virtues which we commonly regard as being appreciated only in civilised society.*

it must be noted that they are a mixed race of African, Arab, and perhaps Persian blood.

* The fact is, civilisation takes too much upon herself. There is more of equality between the savage and the civilizee—the difference

Were we to measure this people by the standard of their proverbial morality, we should come to the conclusion that they had attained no inconsiderable height in the development of social relations, having passed out of that savage barbarism, in which every individual lives for himself alone, into a higher state of being, in which the mutual dependence of one member on another is recognised, giving room for the exercise of social virtues as a sort of moral compact for the safeguard of society."

After illustrating his dictum by instances, Mr. Vidal draws the following deductions:—

"Surely these are indications of no ordinary perception of moral truths, and sufficient to warrant the inference that in closeness of observation, in depth of thought, and in shrewd intelligence, the Yoruban is *οὐ τυχὼν ἀνηρ* —no ordinary man. The existence of proverbs such as these, amongst a people situated as the Yorubans are, is a fact pregnant with many thoughts, on which the theologian and the moralist may dwell with advantage, and may awaken in all an interest in a nation towards whom the sympathies of the public have been already directed by the exciting events of their recent political history.

being one of quantity, not of quality—than the latter will admit. For man is everywhere commensurate with man. Hence, whilst the average Englishman despises the Yoruba, the Yoruba "reciprocates" with hate and fear.

We can now see a little way into the thoughts and feelings of that people, which has come prominently before our notice as the butt of the last efforts of the expiring slave trade, and the repeller of those efforts: * we can now dive a little into that sea of mind, to which the Dahomian tyrant would fain have cried, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;' which he would fain have bound in the chains of slavery like the Persian monarch of old, but which refused to be fettered, rising up wholly like a flood, and forcing his proud army to flee before it. Surely great interest must attach to an insight into the mind of such a people, now for the first time furnished to the civilised world in the work before us, by one of the most intelligent amongst them, † whose long acquaintance with foreign civilisation renders him capable of appreciating the importance of the work which he has undertaken, and of estimating the difficulty which attends upon the task of rendering intelligible in a new language, the ideas of another, wholly diverse and alien."

* * * * *

The idea of the present compilation was suggested to me by an old and favourite work—the delight, indeed, of all Anglo-Eastern students—"Roebuck's Oriental Pro-

* To which we may now add, "and since its re-establishment, itself the most ardent of enslavers." Within the last four years it has sold off some 20,000—Ijaye people, its allies.

† Then the Rev. Mr., now the Right. Rev. Bishop Crowther.

verbs," whose breadth of plan has rendered it a kind of manual of Asiatic thought.* Without attaching high importance to aphorisms and apophthegms as the "concentrated expression of profound sagacity"—indeed, the saws and adages of most languages generally run in pairs, the one contradicting the other†—we may not the less regard them as "often the characteristic representation of modes of thought peculiar to the people amongst whom they are current, and therefore valuable accessories to the delineation of national manners and opinions." It seemed to me that the readiest, indeed the only, way of understanding the negro is to let him speak of himself

* "The nations of the East have always delighted in the significant brevity of aphoristic eloquence, and the Proverbs of Solomon are a satisfactory testimony of the antiquity and extent of their employment amongst the Jews. The Arabs were not less addicted to this phraseology than the Hebrews, and the vast collection of Maidain forms, perhaps, but a limited repository of Arabic proverbs. Many of them have, of course, passed into the languages of Persia and India, but there is no want of such idioms in those dialects of a purely indigenous origin: the latter is especially rich in this respect, and the student of Hindustani, or Hindi, can scarcely open a book in which he is not hampered by the recurrence in almost every page of idiomatic phrases of local application, unfamiliar allusions, and proverbial sententiousness."—Introduction to Capt. Thomas Roebuck's Collection of Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases in the Persian and Hindoostani Languages. Calcutta, 1824.

† So the poet says:—

"All things are double, one against another."

And to quote one proverb against another, there is our English dictum:—"Wise men make proverbs, and fools use them."

in his own words, and that if ever a book aspires to the title of 'L'African peint par lui-meme,' it must be one that contains a most compendious collection of purely Hamitic proverbs and idioms. Already the Englishman begins to own that he cannot dive into the abysses of the Chinese and Japanese character: the Russians and the Anglo-Americans declare—and perhaps all nations, pure and mixed, might do the same—that they cannot be understood by foreigners. The African has long been confessedly a puzzle. That the Japhite—we will retain these useful but conventional and provisional terms—cannot enter into the mysteries of Hamitic organisation, is easily proved by the vast scale of different gradations ranging between the two extremes, which make the negro in European opinion either an angel of light or a goblin damned. Those who have observed him the longest, indeed, seem to have elicited only a series of contradictions; witness the Author of "Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast." "Joy and sorrow," we are told, "reckless gaiety and gloomy despondency, exaggerated hopes and distracting fears, unbridled passions and humble meekness, ardent love and cool indifference, furious hate and cordial friendship, prodigal profusion and griping avarice, atheistical unconcern and bigoted superstition, sway by turns their versatile minds, and with a rapidity of change which startles and confounds us." What can be made of such a definition or a description as this?

The matter was ready to my hand, as soon as the thought of a collection suggested itself. I had but to borrow, under due acknowledgement, from the many proverb-lists of linguist authors, who have translated them from various African tongues, with a view to illustrate the grammar rather than the logic of the negro. The books from which I have copied are so scattered, as will appear in the following pages, that the general reader never has an opportunity of perusing them: and this will, it is trusted, justify me in publishing such a compilation.

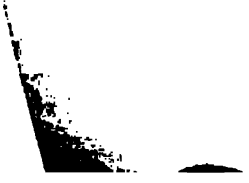
This Handbook contains a total of 2268 proverbs, idioms, enigmas, laconisms, and words conveying knowledge concerning the people's habits and superstitions. Of these, 226 are in the Wolof Tongue, 83 in the Kanuri, or Bornuese. I have appended but few explanations to them, principally because their manifestly Semitic modes of thought render them sufficiently intelligible to the European mind. On the other hand, the contrary has been judged necessary with the purely Hamitic, whose richness of metaphor and whose peculiar method of envisaging moral and physical phenomena, to say nothing of an ellipsis often forced and sometimes obscure, renders them like a Sankrit or a Prakrit, as compared with an Arabic or a Persian book, unfamiliar to us, and beyond or beside, as it were, our views. Of these there are 265 in the Oji, or Ashante, language; 221 in the Ga, or Accra,

tongue: the latter are less diffusely illustrated, because explained by the former. Ensue 608 in the idiom of Yoruba, most of them necessitating a somewhat lengthy explanation. A few are borrowed from the Efun, or Dahome, one of the many dialects of Yoruba: there is a small collection from the Isubu and Dualla of the Bight of Biafra: the miscellaneous collection containing a total of 37; the Eŭk dialect of the Old Calabar River, in the Bight of Biafra, has supplied 814; and, lastly, there are 14 specimens from the Mpangwes (Fans) of the Upper Gaboon River.

The orthography of the original collectors has been, by the advice of my learned friend, Mr. William Stirling, M.P., of Keir, retained.

I relieve the reader from further preface, hoping that he will find as much pleasure and profit in perusing, as the compiler has had in collecting, during the dreary solitude of a rainy season in the Tropics, the "Hand-book of West African Proverbial Philosophy."

Fernando Po,
July 23, 1863.



CONTENTS.

PAGE

I.—PROVERBS IN THE WOLOF TONGUE 3

II.—PROVERBS IN THE KANURI TONGUE 41

III.—PROVERBS IN THE OJI TONGUE 63

IV.—PROVERBS IN THE GA OR ACCRA LANGUAGE . . . 133

V.—PROVERBS IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE 179

VI.—PROVERBS IN THE EFIK, OR OLD CALABAR, LANGUAGE 323

VARIA VARIORUM 413

VII.—PROVERBIAL SAYINGS AND IDIOMS IN THE MPANGWE (FAN) TONGUE 439

MISCELLANEOUS PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS . . 445

I.

PROVÉRBS

IN

THE WOLOF TONGUE.

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA.

PROVERBS IN THE WOLOF TONGUE.

THE subjoined collection of Proverbs is extracted from that excellent work, M. Dard's Grammar.*

The Wolofs, formerly called Joloffs,† are mentioned by many travellers. As early as A.D. 1446 they were known to the Portuguese; and in the reign of King

* Grammaire Wolofe, ou Méthode pour étudier la langue des noirs qui habitent Les Royaumes de Bourba-Yolof, de Walo, de Damel, de Bour-sine, de Saloume, de Baole, en Sénégambie. Suivi d'un appendice où sont établis les particularités les plus essentielles des principales langues de L'Afrique Septentrionale. Par J. Dard, Instituteur de l'École Wolofe-Française du Sénégal, Auteur des dictionnaires Wolof et Bambara. Imprimé par autorisation du Roi à l'imprimerie royale, 1826.

It is popularly said in Senegal that no one will ever speak Wolof like M. Dard. The reason is, that, under the new regime of compulsory French instruction, the vernacular language languishes,—loses all its raciness.

† According to the Polyglotta Africana "Jolof" is merely a "Wolof" district.

John, one "Bemoir," of princely house, visited Lisbon in state, was baptised, and did homage to the European king. Their habitat is "Senegambia," the country between the rivers Gambia and the Senegal, the latter separating them from the Assanhaji, who are held to be the Sanhagii of Leo Africanus. They are "black, but comely," with long-oval faces, finely-formed features, straight noses, and jetty glossy skins: in character they are brave and dignified, and they are distinctly not negroes, but negroids.

Their language differs from those around them, and is remarkable for copiousness and picturesqueness. It is widely extended, because Senegambia has long been—like the North African coast—the importation-place of European goods intended for Central Africa, for Timbuktu, Hausa, Bornu, and the upper Nigerian basin. Besides the natives of the maritime countries, the people of Bundu, Kayaga (Galam), Kaarta, Kasson, Fuladu, and Bambara, all affect it. As M. Dard remarks, Mungo Park has often used, in his "African Travels," expressions which he deems Mandenga, but which may be Wolof. For instance, in the story of "poor Nealee," "Kang-tegi!"—"cut her throat;" would be, in Wolof, "Kung akateke!"—"let her head be cut off!" and "Nealee affeeleeata," is equally corrupted by the author or printer from Nealee afeyleata, which signifies moreover not "Nealee is lost," but simply "Nealee breathes no more."

In Wolof the Proverbs are numerous and expressive: the people are exceedingly fond of them, and a European with any knowledge of these wise sayings, can travel amongst them not only in safety, but with all respect. I would request the reader to compare these

and the Kanuri proverbs, which are both Moslem, with those of the Kafirs or Infidels in the Oji, the Ga, and the Yoruba languages. M. Dard's orthography is preserved throughout.

1.

Ba nga sainata rone, rone a la diaka saina.

When thou seest the palm-tree, the palm-tree has seen thee.

2.

Jalele sainou ane na sainou guissetil dara, tey mague dieki thy soufe guissa yope.

The child looks everywhere and often sees nought; but the old man, sitting on the ground, sees everything.

3.

Ntiole dou napa thy tate ou morome am omeley.

The diver-bird cannot catch fish behind his companion.

N.B.—Omelé is "to catch an abundance of fish."

4.

Lou jalele vaja thia saine keurre la ko deguey.

What the child says, he has heard it at home.

N.B.—Distinctly referring to the "enfant terrible" class.

5.

Lou gouy ry ry, guife a di ndeey am.

The great calabash-tree has had a seed for its mother.

6.

Sou batou ou nda diakono thia nsakje dieetil.

If only the small measure goes to the shop, the millet will last long.

7.

Jadhie sou sassoul, dou baw.

If the dog is not at home, he barks not.

8.

Poudhie ou naigue de na jaija ah taw, tey sailo yagoul.

The house-roof fights with the rain, but he who is sheltered ignores it.

9.

Jama sa bope mo guenne kou la ko waja.

Know thyself better than he does who speaks of thee.

10.

Tabaje sou diamanto mbande todhiele (de nga ko todhia).

If you practise your 'prentice-hand upon a large jar, you will break it.

11.

Jamoul aya na, tey ladhieteoul a ko raw.

Not to know is bad, not to wish to know is worse.

12.

Yape dou dieala yape.

Meat eats not meat.

N.B.—Meaning, beggars do not devour one another.

13.

Sou doul kone toubeye diouly aya.

But for the wide trowsers, prayer would be a scandal.

N.B.—Because prostration would be indecent.

14.

Kou amoul ndeey nampa mame am.

He who has no mother sucks his grandmother.

15.

Kou tey jamone ndialbene, moudhie di noflaye.

If you know the beginning well, the end will not trouble you.

16.

Sopa bour ayoul, wandey bour bou la sopa a ko guenne.

To love the king is not bad, but a king who loves you is better.

17.

Kou tey jamone kou nga bokala bakane, mou di sa ande thy adouna.

Whoso knows one who will die with him, he (*the known*) will be his friend in this world.

18.

Nitte de na anda ak morome am, tey dou masse am.

Man should take as companion one older than himself.

19.

Rafete dhiko mo guenne dhiko dhiou bone.

A good action is better than a bad action.

20.

Nitte gou lou nga dinthia mou defa thia lojo am doyoul deukala.

A man who touches what you have shut up, should not dwell with you.

21.

La diarake ama di youja sou ko njw amone diala.

What the convalescent refuses, would give pleasure to the dead.

22.

Guema na dee, ndigui yaje.

I believe the death, because of the bones.

23.

Diaeekat ou yaje demmetil dianew.

The born-merchant goes not to the other world.

24.

Bala nga toufou, fetal y beutte.

Before curing ophthalmia, the eyes must be seen.

25.

Sou bounte ou naigue amone y gobar kaine dou guenna.

If the door had daggers, no one would leave the room.

26.

Bula nga ouyou naika fa.

Before one replies, one must be present.

27.

Sou doul kone barame lojo di koudou.

Without fingers the hand would be a spoon.

28.

Daw dou maee y taliba.

Running about gives no scholars.

N.B.—Our "Rolling stone gathers no moss."

29.

Sou ma jathio soufe, dorey fa ma naika.

If I wanted to collect sand, I should begin where I am.

30.

Lou diarake bone bone, mana waka niw.

He who is scarcely convalescent, can stifle a dead man.

31.

Teuradi agoul dianew.

He who always turns when sleeping, does it no more in the other world.

32.

Lou bouki oma oma, mana bare ak bay.

Though the wolf be lean, he can contend with a goat.

33.

Mbajaney dou faikey dee ou borome am.

The cup finds not out its master's death.

N.B.—Because it passes into other hands.

34.

Sou nitte dialey dangogne am di simey thierey, bou ko niana nieje.

If a man makes soup of his tears, do not ask him for broth.

35.

Jaidhie ou nthiokaire ak sene am kou thia fatte guessi oma.

She whom the partridge loves, as she whom he hates, would starve if they forgot to scratch the ground (*for food*).

36.

Mbote a guenne beugua ndoje, wandey mou tangue bokou thia.

The frog enjoys itself in water, but not in hot water.

37.

Gane you barey bougaloul mbame seuf.

Many guests matter little to the ass of the inn.

38.

Lo mana mana bire ou nitte difa na thia lou nga yagoul.

Thou knowest not what man's stomach can contain.

39.

Kou guiro kone maee la, difa thia ndabe la ngaine boka.

He who takes thy part at the dish to give it to thee, had better allow thee to take it.

40.

Kou lajoul laika laja til diaee.

He who makes not soup for himself, will not make *bouillie* for sale.

41.

Beugueti ma laje, bel sama bope defa bosse.

I want no boiled meat if my head must be the trivet (*which supports the pot*).

42.

Kou jaiba laje ou ndeki defou gnou ko thy nope am.

When you give a man boiled meat for breakfast, you do not pour it into his ears.

43.

Kou teuba ak y sabare danou ak y ngnote, sou nga laine laikoul, kone itte gnou dhiegna la laine.

He who jumps upon the corn-bundles falls with the ears, and if thou dost not eat them thou wilt be the less charged with eating them.

44.

Dhiguene dhiou oudhie am dee, dara bougalou ko thia.

A woman who has lost her rival has no sorrow.

45.

Bour bou amoul y nitte dou done bour.

A subjectless king is no king.

46.

Kou di beugua rindi bope am, sou gnon ko beuguey rindi varroul youja.

He who wishes to blow out his brains, need not fear their being blown out by others.

47.

Barey nieje, barey thierey ko guenna.

Much soup is better than much broth.

48.

Na gore ayebir, tey bou mou aye lamigne.

Let man be bad if (only) his tongue be good.

49.

Boigne de na ree, wandey derette anga thia souf am.

The teeth may laugh, but the blood is above them.

50.

Wathial jale vou, nejeley maguati ko.

Prevent him not who walks in the fire, for it would be a great compliment.

51.

Lou berafe feta feta dala thia ande am.

Toasted seeds jump, but they always fall towards their companions.

52.

Y gore yope ametil diabar, y dhiguene yope ametil diakar.

All men have not wives, and all women are not married.

53.

Daw raw thy ngore la boka.

He who runs away and escapes, is clever.

54.

Daw dhitou dou maee kailifa.

To run the best, does not give the highest rank.

55.

Bala gna fadhiana diaka verle.

Before healing others, heal thyself.

56.

Yonne amoul nkerre.

A road has no shadow.

57.

Ndegam barame ou deye mo aye, guennetey nthiastane.

If the big finger be greedy, the heel is more so.

58.

New na mo guenne dara.

A little is better than nothing.

59.

Faka na la, mo guenne jamou ma la.

"I have forgotten thy name," is better than "I know thee not."

60.

Sou eure nawey, mbote dou fannde.

If the fly flies, the frog goes not supperless to bed.

61.

Fassale sou ittey togna.

He who separates men that are fighting, should not strike them.

62.

Diama sakete dou ndana.

The hunter who pierces the tree, has not shot well.

63.

Bedhine dou dhiaka saja bope.

Horns grow not before the head.

64.

Gadhia ndoje, sa deunne a thia maiti.

To cleave water hurts the stomach.

65.

Mpetaje ou rabe la.

The pigeon of the animal is there.

N.B.—A Senegambian phrase, used to stop a conversation concerning one absent, when suddenly there appears somebody who is likely to let him know what was said. M. Dard considers this proverb a proof that negroes formerly used carrier pigeons. It may, however, allude to the mythical pigeon that whispered in the Prophet's ear.

66.

Vaidil, so guissey guemal.

Deny, but what thou seest believe!

67.

Mpithie sou bagney daije, souje la niala.

If the bird drinks not at the stream, it knows its own watering place.

68.

Lou mpithie nana nana, nanetil nane ou gneye.

The bird can drink much, but the elephant drinks more.

69.

Mpetaje mou naika thy talle, niro oul sabine ak ma thia kaw garap.

The voice of the pigeon on the spit is not like the voice of the pigeon on the tree.

70.

Lou narre barey barey sou deugue diokey diota ko.

Lies, however numerous, will be caught by truth when it rises up.

71.

Nthiokaire beugua na seube, wandey dou dhiou mou andala thy nthine.

The partridge loves peas, but not those which go into the pot with it.

72.

Garap gou nga romba mou sanni la y mbourou sou thia euluek so, nga romba fa.

If the tree under which you pass throw bread to you, you will pass it again to-morrow.

73.

Nejala kou la fassale, nejala kou la dana a ko guenne.

To flatter one who separates us is good, but it is better to flatter one who strikes us.

74.

Ama na kou la ni ma yenna la, tey sa ndabe la beugua saita.

There are people who place a basket on your head to see what you carry.

75.

Boigne a di sakete ou guemigne.

Teeth serve as a fence to the mouth.

76.

Jadhie bou guenna amoul borome.

The dog that has left the house has no master.

77.

Maitite ou jole sou naikone thy tanke gnou soja ko.

If the stomach-ache were in the foot, one would go lame.

78.

Lu nga niaka niaka njel, jama ni diabar ou baye ndeey la.

Though thou hast no mother-wit, thou knowest that the father's wife is mother.

79.

Sou bidow done mbourou, barey kou fanana bity.

If the stars were loaves, many people would sleep out.

80.

Assamana modi bour y mbare.

The sky is the king of sheds.

81.

Goudi modi bour ou nkerre.

Night is the queen of shades.

82.

Soufe modi bour y lal.

Earth is the queen of beds.

83.

Diante modi bour y nitou.

The sun is the king of torches.

84.

Mpethie ou sagor lou nga thia gawantou kone yoboul goube.

If you go to the sparrows' ball, take ears of corn for them.

85.

Bala nga dhitou diote.

Before preceding, one must reach.

86.

Kou di dioee kou ko wata defa, amoul kou ko bota.

He who cries to have himself dragged, has no one to carry him.

87.

Ntortor ou garap gope dou defa dome.

All the flowers of a tree do not produce fruit.

88.

Kou mana faiya dou jarou thy ndoje.

He who knows swimming, dies not in the water.

89.

Sou sipou ngabo guennetey pate.

If he who buys milk is proud, he who sells it should be prouder.

90.

Naije lamigne thy ndiaee, demma fou sorey a ko guenna.

To vaunt one's goods is good, but it is better to go where they are bought.

91.

Bate ou deugue yomba na jama.

The voice of truth is easily known.

92.

Samme bagna na naija barame.

A shepherd strikes not his sheep.

93.

Gneye vou doja ndiolore mo lou ndine am sakou.

If the elephant were to walk about at mid-day, everybody would call him.

94.

Jaije diama ane na euleuk, tey niaka-soutoura taje ko di teye.

He will fight to-morrow; but if there is a dispute, it is to-day.

95.

Yebou thia nangou thia, kou la thia yoni nga gaw thia demma.

We go quickly where we are sent, when we take interest in the journey.

96.

Sajadi, laikadi, veradi, tole bou mou ama dougoup dou thia ama.

Not to bud, not to eat, not to be cured, give no grain in one's field.

97.

Ke dialou youja, jama na lou jaiwe.

He who weeps from the morning, knows what makes him weep.

98.

Bala nga rera dioka.

Before losing the road, one must rise up.

99.

Demmal mo guenne do demma.

"Go!" is better than "Don't go!"

100.

Kou la ni maeel sa alale, sa nguarame la beugua.

He who tells you to give away your property, deserves your thanks.

101.

Voe ou bire diafe na degua.

The song of the stomach is hard to hear.

102.

Satou kou ko logua yabi damme.
If you fill your mouth with a razor, you will spit blood.

103.

Satou dou wata bope am.
A razor cannot shave itself.

104.

Yalla dekala yomba na ko.
To resuscitate, is easy to Allah.

105.

Yague bai oul dara.
Time destroys all things.

106.

Mougne a guenne.
Patience is good.

107.

Jama a guenne.
Knowledge is good.

108.

Fora neuba dou jelo diebaley.
One returns not what one hides after finding it.

109.

Mana a guenne.
Power is good.

110.

Waje y magne doyoul vaidi.

Thou shalt not contradict an elder's words.

111.

Ri bire ama lou nga laika baje na thia.

To have plenty to eat, is good for the big belly.

112.

Jalele bagna na lo mou tamma.

The child hates him who gives it all it wants.

113.

Sou gnou la ittey thy berab, bainaine yone do fa demma.

If they smite thee in a place, thou wilt go there no more.

114.

Koumpa diapa na nitte thy diombasse ou kani.

Curiosity often leads men into bitterness.

115.

Sou mbajaney done nana yore, kaine dou ko solla.

If the hat drank the brain, nobody would wear it.

116.

Garap lo thia gadhia mou sajati.

The split tree still grows.

117.

Seupadiallegne dou dindi joujane.

To make a summersault, will not remove a rupture.

118.

Yalla sou done defa sago bagney, defa sago sopey.

If Allah gives reason to hate, he also gives reason to love.

119.

Lou saja y doungue naw guenaou bandioli.

Everything that has feathers flies, except the ostrich.

120.

Kou dhionkana yomba na danela.

What lowers itself, is ready to fall.

121.

Kewale gua thia guethie, dana manou ko diama.

The hind in the sea fears not the hunter.

122.

Sou noppe done rathia laje, guou woa mbame.

If ears could stir boiled meat, one would call the pig.

123.

Kou amoul y noppe dou degua.

He who has no ears, hears not.

124.

Lanthie tati la, nga mbare deugua.

If you have nothing to eat, you will not seek lodgings.

125.

Kou sango deurre na vatou diegui safara

He who covers himself with cotton, should not approach the fire.

126.

Dome lou mou faika thy vene ou ndeey am la nampa.

The infant sucks only what it finds in its mother's breasts.

127.

Kou amoul mboube sa bire faigna.

He who has no shirt, shows his stomach.

128.

Kou ama dhiour diaee laine.

He who has goods can sell them.

129.

Bala nga togua ama rande.

Before cooking, one must have provisions.

130.

Boreey leufe a la reelo.

One laughs not without cause.

131.

Bala nga sanni dira.

Before shooting, one must aim.

132.

Sou nga amey fasse varra ko.

If you have a horse, mount it.

133.

Lou gname barey barey, moudhie dieja.

Although you have many provisions, you will see the end of them.

134.

Kou la diaka dhioudou eupe la y sagar.

He who is born the first, has the most of ragged clothes.

N.B.—Because the younger children—in Africa—get the best.

135.

Kou diakey vajetane dou ko moudhie.

He who begins a conversation, sees not the end.

136.

Gnou ma done waja baye, dhiourou ma laine.

I have not begotten all that call me sire.

137.

Kou solla yerey you diafe, leguy anga solla sagar.

He who wears too fine clothes, shall go about in rags.

138.

Kou vorra kou la doul vorra, Yalla vorra la.

He who betrays one that betrays him not, Allah shall betray him.

139.

Navete bo dika di taw y jale bou ko gnome.

If live coals fell in the bad weather, no one would go out.

140.

Kou nga ni vaukal ma, dou la vaukal fou la naija.

He who says "Scratch me!" shall not be scratched where he wishes.

141.

Lou dogna danou guenaou jale.

All that one cuts falls to the ground, except the melon.

142.

Manou gnou ama dara tey sonou gnou thia.

No good without truth.

N.B.—Nul bien sans peine.

143.

Ella waja bou ntoute, tey deguelou bou barey.

One must talk little, and listen much.

N.B.—Talk is silver, silence is gold.

144.

Lou dougua thy benne noppe guenna thia baley.

What goes in at one ear goes out by the other.

145.

Y waje you baje, dou mae lou gno laika.

The best words give no food.

N.B.—Fine words butter no parsnips.

146.

Kou naike ndaje bope am, tey Yalla ndaje gnop.

Each for himself, and Allah for all.

147.

Niare y beutte de nagnou guenna gnissa asse benne

Two eyes see better than one.

148.

Ama na y beutte you guenna ry asse guemigne am.
His eyes are larger than his mouth.

N.B.—A popular proverb in Asia as well as in Africa.

149.

Kou naike sopa na niro am.
Everybody likes those like him.

150.

Guenne galle dou yeba morome am.
One boat does not load another.

151.

Dou gnou tekjale niare y nague you mbakante.
One cannot part two fighting bulls.

152.

Dou gnou laikelo nitte sou sourey.
One should not press a full man to eat.

153.

Kaine dou waja lou mou jamoul.
No one should say that which he knows not.

154.

Kou beugua jalisse ligueya.
He who loves money must labour.

155.

Koudi di binda nopalikou.
He who writes, rests himself.

156.

Lekatte sou done nitte kou thia defa gname mou youja.

If the plate were a man, the soup put into it would make him weep.

157.

Guethie kou ko joussa toya.

He who crosses the sea, is wet.

158.

Niare gnou gouda sikime, dou gnou fonante.

Those that have long chins cannot kiss one another.

159.

Demma fo yonne amoul monguenne dieki lojo nene.

To go where there is no road, is better than to remain without doing anything.

160.

Sou la la nague dey dakja nga teuda.

If the bull would throw thee, lie down.

161.

Faleou ma nthine lou bajoul.

I listen not to the caldron which boils not.

162.

Faleou ma barame bou amoul ve.

I listen not to the finger that has no nail.

163.

Leufe lou la Yalla tegua kaine manou ko dindi.

The thing which Allah has placed, cannot be displaced by any one.

164.

Kou manoul dara, dou defa dara.

He who can do nothing, does nothing.

165.

Kou guenne di bour thy adouna, mo guenne di diame thia lajira.

The more powerful one is in this world, the more servile one will be in the next.

166.

Diaka lae dou taje nga aiya.

The first who speaks of lawsuit is not always right.

167.

Kou sa bagne dee do ko dioee.

He who loses his enemy, weeps not for him.

168.

Lou nga sopa sopa dome ou diambour, sa dome gnennala la ko.

If you love the children of others, you will love your own even better.

169.

Ope dhiou maiti dou taja dee.

A severe malady does not always kill.

170.

Sou nga dialou lai lala la.

If you rise too early, the dew will wet you.

171.

Kaine dou dogua la ou dhiane.

No one cuts the serpent's net.

172.

Kou dagua dhiane, dou la ni wathia ko.

If you trample on the serpent, no one will say to you, "Don't!"

173.

Da rama, di sathia sou maguey diala guette.

If the child robs when he begins to walk, he will plunder a sheepfold when he grows older.

174.

Darra diante dou ko taire finka.

To place oneself before the sun, does not prevent its continuing its path.

175.

Soula nkerre dou ko taire tora.

To cover the shade of sand, does not prevent its flying.

176.

Dara dou doe nitte, jana lou mou amoul.

Nothing can suffice a man except that which he has not.

177.

Kou di jassaba yonne amoul serre.

He who amuses himself in ell-ing the road, has no stuff to measure.

178.

Daigue dou bour, wandey kou ko beugua joussa soumi sa y dalle.

The rivulet is not a king, yet he who would cross it removes his shoes.

179.

Venne fepe ou dougoup dou diara salou.

A grain of millet is not worth a calf.

180.

Kou Yalla maee mou ama.

He to whom Allah gives, has.

181.

Lou mpithie naw, naw 'dala thi soufe.

The bird flies, but always returns to earth.

182.

Kou dajka jadhie bel thia saine keurre nga bai ko.

He who hunts a dog home, then leaves it.

183.

Gneye manoul thy dakjar dara, jana gassam-gassama bai.

An elephant can do nothing to a tamarind-tree, except it be to shake it.

184.

Nthine dou ama kavare ndigui safara.

The caldron has no hair by reason of the fire.

185.

Kou Yalla sanni faite do ko mana fakou.

He at whom Allah has discharged a shaft, cannot avoid it.

186.

Fou dhianaje yabey woundou, nkane a fa diaguey.

When the mouse laughs at the cat, there is a hole.

187.

Sou gna douguey thy naigue youja, guenna youja do jama niata laa a thia naika.

If you weep on entering a house, and also on leaving it, you will never know how many beams it has.

188.

Kedo yope dou gnou bour.

All soldiers are not kings.

189.

Guene ou golaje gouda na, wandey lou nga thia lala borome yegua.

The monkey's tail is long, and yet if you touch it, its owner feels (*the touch*).

190.

Samme sagna na maee mew, wandey sagnoul maee salou.

The shepherd can give sweet milk, but he cannot give a calf.

191.

Sagore beugua na dougoup, wandey dou baya.

The sparrow loves millet, but he labours not.

192.

Barey dougoup faikey dewanne a ko guenna.

Much millet is good, but it is better to find next year.

193.

Vata a guenne vaifa.

Shaving is better than plucking the hair.

194.

Guissa de na taja jama.

Seeing excites to knowing.

195.

Dono gueramoul kaine gaw dee a ko maee.

The heir thanks nobody but the sudden death.

196.

Dhiguene doyoul volou, ndigui lou mou la waja, waja ko sa morome.

Trust not a woman: she will tell thee what she has just told her companion.

197.

Kou beugua laime, gnomel yambe.

If you like honey, fear not the bees.

198.

Bala nga laika oubil sa guemigne.

Before eating, open thy mouth.

199.

Fou nague naika bouki dee fa.

Where are the cattle, there the wolf shall die.

200.

Teudal doyoul digala niw.

You do not tell a corpse to go to bed.

201.

Kou yakey lojo bai koudou dou ko niarel a.

He who puts aside his spoon to draw from the pot with his hand, does not do so twice.

202.

Gnou yamoul y lorre, dou gnou makjando soungoufe.

Those whose saliva is not equal, should not chew flour (*grain ?*) together.

203.

Daigue ou pote y jame am dou ko nana.

They who know the unwholesome well, drink not from its water.

204.

Ama sano de na apela barey, wandey dou apela weje.

One may have much milk, but it is never too white.

205.

Mbajaney mo natta thy sa bope they diekou thia bou ko natta thy sa bope ou naweley.

If the hat which you try on fits not your head, do not make your neighbour try it.

206.

Mere mandingne, doja bou gaw a ko guenne.

It is better to walk than to grow angry with the road.

207.

Fatfatlou dou fassale mbame seuf ak y nope am.

Shaking the head separates not the ears from the ass.

208.

Seupadiallegna dou la fassale ak y teigne.

A summersault does not separate the head from the lice.

209.

Lakaye ou Yalla, jalanjou dou ko dindi.

Rolling in the sand will not loosen the knot which Allah has tied.

210.

Fou sikime diama saino ko fa yobou.

Where the chin goes, the eyes carry it.

211.

Kou deugua watite ou dhiane borome anga fa faikoul.

One walks on the serpent's tracks when it is no longer there.

212.

Lou nga telle telle dioka, yonne dhitou la.

He who rises early finds the way short.

213.

Kou di nana ngueloo son diothey thy sauo diala.

He who lives upon air has no milk.

214.

Nthiokaire lo naw di gassa sou daley doupi dhiandhie.

If the partridge that scratches when flying should alight at the grange, it will throw the grain about on all sides.

215.

Son nga faikey gnou di joulo, sou nga thia farey, wajetey deugue gua.

If you meet with those who quarrel, you may take one side, but at least speak the truth.

216.

Garap gou la souttoul dou la maee nkerre.

The tree which is not taller than thou art, cannot shade thee.

217.

Beutte dou yenou, wandey lou bepe atana jama na ko.

The eye is not loaded, but it knows all that the head carries.

218.

So nioul tota, niou la bow, niti le dhiangne do ama ligueye.

If you remain not at home, if you enter not, if you appear not, you will find no work.

219.

Sissey die rafete ou ndougue a ko guenne.

It is better to carry to market good merchandise than to be stingy of it.

220.

Boka ndeey dou taja mane.

The children of the same mother do not always agree.

221.

Yalla dou rayala nitte y bagne am.

Allah does not destroy the men whom one hates.

222.

Kou la soutta nga ni ko ndiole mi.

To him who is larger than thou art, say "I am a dwarf."

N.B.—Meaning, call great, only him who is more powerful than thyself.

223.

Lamba dadioul dara mo guenna noe diou.

To catch and hold nothing, is more tender than butter.

N.B.—This imitates our saying about "many a slip," &c.

224.

So dey diemma ngnampata dialame mbole ngn amoul.

He who tries to bite the iron, is without corn-ears to eat.

N.B.—Dialame is a little iron cylinder serving to separate the seed from the cotton.

225.

Kou la ni, nga ni ko, joulo niaw gaw.

If you speak to him who speaks to you, a dispute will soon start up.

226.

Kou bota bouki jadhie baw la.

He who swaddles the wolf, will be barked at by the dog.

PROVERBS IN THE KANURI TONGUE.

THE following Proverbs and Sayings, Laconisms and Figurative Expressions, are taken from the Rev. M. Koelle's work.* The reader will bear in mind that the

* African Native Literature, or Proverbs, Tales, Fables, and Historical Fragments in the Kanuri or Bornu Language; to which are added, a Translation of the above and a Kanuri-English Vocabulary. By the Rev. S. W. Koelle, Church Missionary. London, Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1854. I have retained the reverend gentleman's orthography, necessarily omitting, however, signs and accents.

Bornu (Bornou, Bernu) Proper, according to Dr. Barth (vol. ii. p. 201) is the nucleus of the Great Central African (and now quasi-Moslem) Empire in its second stage, after Kanem had been given up. It is bounded on the north by the Tibbu, south by Mandara, to the east by the Chad Lake, and to the west by a small body of water, popularly known as the Yeou. The limits usually assigned are 200 miles along the western shore of the larger lake, and about the same distance inland. The people, who call themselves Kanuri or Kanowry, are known by twenty cuts on each side of the face, one on the centre of the forehead, six on each arm, six on each leg or thigh, four on each breast, and nine on each side, a total of ninety-one cuts. The country is an extensive plain, once very populous; in the chief market, "Angornu," the crowd has been estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 souls. Taking the word Bornu in its widest sense, the population has been raised to five millions. The old capital, Birni, is said to have covered from five to six square miles, and to have contained 200,000 souls. Early in the present century, however, it was overrun with dreadful devastation by its western neighbours, the Fellatahs. The

Bornuese, though described by some travellers as "complete negroes both in form and feature," are, like the Mandengas and Wolofs, a Moslem race, with a considerable amount of Semitic innervation, and their proverbs will contrast strongly with those current amongst the Pagans of the Gold Coasts and Yoruba.

1.

Nontsenin kampunye lanentsia, ate gerganemmi.

If one who knows thee not, or a blind man scolds thee, do not become angry.

2.

Ago komande ntsinite, dunon manem, pandem bago.

If thou seekest to obtain by force what the Lord has not given thee, thou wilt not obtain it.

3.

Kabu datsia, kargun bago.

The days being finished, there is no medicine.

N.B.—Meaning, if one's time to live is completed, no medicine can ward off death.

country recovered under the Shaykh who was visited by Major Denham in 1823; this man, a native of Kanem, of humble birth but great energy, rallied round him a band of spearmen, had a vision of the Prophet, hoisted the green flag, and, after a ten months' campaign, liberated his country, and replaced the rightful sultan on the throne. The picture of this worthy, "squatting on a sort of cane-basket, covered with silk," must be fresh in the recollection of every reader of African travels.

4.

Ago fugube rumin, ngafobe rum bago.

Thou seest what is before, not what is behind thee.

N.B.—Meaning, thou knowest the past, but not the future.

5.

Angalte silman gani karga, kalalan karga.

Wisdom is not in the eye, but in the head.

6.

Kampuro ago yiminya, ka muskontsibeturo ganagem, dugo siro ye; wageya niro "ago simmi" tsenia, ka muskontsibetiye sedaro naptsin.

If thou givest anything to a blind man, lay it first upon the staff in his hand ere thou givest it to him; in the next world, when he shall say, "thou hast not given me anything!" the staff in his hand will bear witness.

7.

Gedi kanadiben tsannawa.

At the bottom of patience there is heaven.

8.

Kam burgo souartia derege ademmaro kotsi.

Being prepared before-hand is better than afterthought.

9.

Kam neontse bagote si manantse bago dabu kam meoguben.

He that has no house, has no word in society.

10.

Mana kamuye ndi nemetsia, tilo gonem, tilo kolone.

If a woman speaks two words, take one and leave the other.

11.

Burgontse burgo kenyeribe gadi.

He is as cunning as a weazel.

12.

Kamte ago ngala kammo tsedia, nemgalate pattsegin bago.

If a man confers a benefit upon another, that benefit is not lost (to himself).

13.

Kannu kam tsebui.

Fire devours a man.

N.B.—Meaning, "He is in great affliction."

14.

Kam dantse keli kwoya, sima na kannubero gertegin.

He draws near the fire when meat is raw.

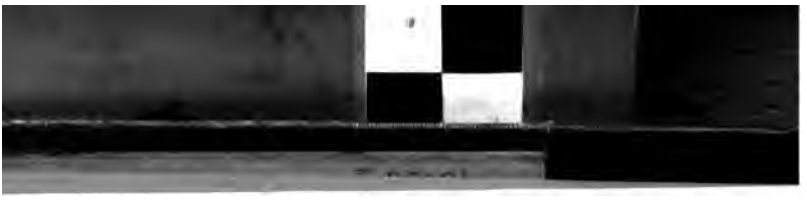
N.B.—He who desires an object, is glad to adopt the requisite measures. The Persian proverb is, "For an object, men kiss the donkey's tail."

II.

PROVERBS

IN

THE KANURI TONGUE.



21.

Kugui timi litsia, wu niga beantseskin.

I will pay thee when fowls cut their teeth.

N.B.—Like the Latin "Ad Græcas kalendas."

22.

Kargete, sima kam kannuro tsatin, sima kam tsannaro tsatin.

It is the heart that carries one to hell or to heaven.

23.

Kam kargen kam tseteite sima kerdigo.

He is a heathen who holds another in his heart.

N.B.—Meaning, who bears malice.

24.

Kam neme am wurabe tsatseranite neme kitabube tsetserani, kam neme kitabube tsatseranite, neme komandebe tsetserani.

He who does not believe what the elders say, will not believe the sayings of the Book (the Bible); and he who does not believe the sayings of the Book, will not believe what the Lord says.

N.B.—This was apparently dictated to M. Koelle by some Christian convert. He informs us, that Pato Ramaba, *i. e.*, Heaven, was the original Kanuri name for God, now generally superseded by the Arabic "Allah."

25.

Afi ʟemketsindo, wote kargenemga kamuro yimmi.

Whatever be thy intimacy, never give thy heart to a woman.

26.

Kaliae afi nemgalantse yaye tatanem dibigo tseteni.

Whatever be the goodness of a slave, he does not come up to a bad son.

27.

Kalia ago kanmersibe gani: kaliaro mersanemia, sima niga ntsetso.

A slave is not a thing to be trusted: if thou trustest a slave he will slay thee.

28.

Kam yantse ganawate asirntse tsakkata.

One who has a younger brother, his secrets are covered.

N.B.—Meaning, he has a confidential friend—in Africa.

29.

Kamte ago ngala dimia, Allaye ngalan niro patsartsin.

If one does good, Allah will interpret it to him for good.

30.

Komande kammo leman tsi yaye, tata bago kwoya, lemante manantse bago.

If our Lord gives riches to a man, and there are no children, the riches have no word.

N.B.—Meaning, they have no object, no value.

31.

Kam komande tata tsinnama, asirntse Allaye tsaktsenamago.

The man to whom the Lord gives children, his secrets Allah covers.

32.

Ago fugubete, komande genya, ngudo dabu kuruguamai tsurui bago.

As to what is future, even a bird with a long neck cannot see it, but the Lord only.

33.

Dinia yermanem bagoro, yermanemma ngalgo.

Since thou hast no benefactor in this world, the having one in the next will be all the more pleasant.

N.B.—A consolation to the poor.

34.

Kam yantse tsambuna bagoya, siga wadadai tsatin.

He whose mother is no more, him distress carries off.

N.B.—Amongst all the Moslem negroes, the mother is ever the best friend. So Mungo Park's Mandenga said, "Strike me, but do not abuse my mother!"

35.

Kam asirntse kamuro gultsegia, kamute sig a tsaba setanbero tseako.

If a man tells his secrets to his wife, she will bring him into the way of Satan.

N.B.—Rather a contrast to the English proverb, "He who would thrive must ask his wife!"

36.

Kamuye tsaba ngalaro kamga tsakin bago.

A woman never brings a man into the right way.

37.

Kam kana kuguibe ntsetsoma bago, sai Alla

No one can kill the appetite of fowls save Allah.

N.B.—Meaning, "Man cannot satisfy them."

38.

Ago dinianyin koron kirnyinno tata tseragenago bago.

Nothing in the world loves its young more than a she-slave and an ass.

39.

Ni talaga kwoya, ate galifu sobanemmi.

If thou art poor, do not make a rich man thy friend.

40.

Nusotoro lenemia, ati pato galifuben tsamnemmi.

If thou goest to a foreign land, do not alight at a rich man's house.

41.

Bulturo dinia watsi tsabalan.

It became day whilst the hyæna was on its way.

N.B.—Meaning, "The man's strength was broken before he attained his object."

42.

Wuma mei "tsiga kamagunbe."

I am "King Elephant-bag."

N.B.—Meaning, "I am so strong that I can carry an elephant in a bag," or "I am so powerful as to think nothing too difficult for me."

43.

Wu tawangi dugo tsabalan wuro dinia wasegi.

I arose early, but the dawning day overtook me on the way.

N.B.—Meaning, "I married a wife in early youth, but had no children by her."

44.

Kanuwari nonemmi kwoya, kanuwate nonemiba?

If thou dost not know hate, dost thou know indifference?

N.B.—Meaning, "How is it thou didst not perceive that I love thee not, even though thou didst not discover that I hate thee?"

45.

Wu gesga gana ruske, kolonge; kura gongimba?

If I see a small tree, shall I leave it and take a large one?

N.B.—Meaning, "If I have a chance of marrying a young man whom I can easily manage, shall I pass him by and marry one who is too strong for me?"

46.

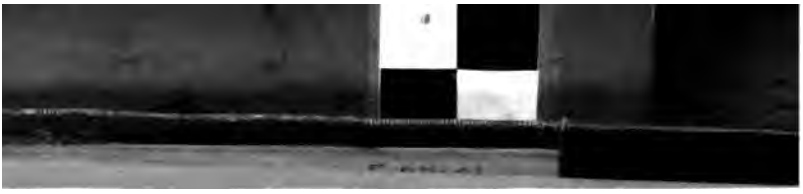
A certain man took a long journey, on which he passed a rich man who had many children, all of them girls; he saluted him, saying, "*Aba talaga wuse*"—poor man, how

art thou? This man was vexed to hear himself called poor. He next passed a poor man who had many little children, all of whom were boys, and him he saluted, saying, "*Aba galifu wuse*"—rich man! how art thou? This man was vexed on account of being called rich. He next met a man who had neither wife nor children, and who, at night, slept in a pitch-dark house without lamp; him he saluted, saying, "*Aba kampu wuse*"—blind man! how art thou? This man was vexed at being called blind. At last he met a man lying under a *kangar*, a tree with very long and sharp thorns; him he saluted, saying, "*Aba koa ngurdegi wuse*"—lame man! how art thou? This man was vexed to hear himself called lame. When the traveller returned, after a long time, he visited these men again, and saluted each by the directly opposite title; but then they were again vexed, since, during his absence, the prophecy contained in his former addresses had been realised.

47.

A certain man had a most beautiful daughter who was beset by many suitors. But as soon as they were told that the sole condition on which they could obtain her was to bale out a brook with a ground nut shell (what is about half the size of a walnut shell), they always walked away in disappointment. However, at last one took heart of grace, and began the task. He obtained the beauty; for the father said, "*kam ago tsuru baditsia tsido*" —he who undertakes what he says, will do it.

N.B.—The Hindoos have a somewhat similar fabliau concerning a sand-piper, who, in revenge for the loss of his young, began to



dry up Samudra Devta, or the ocean. Both teach men not to admit the word "impossible" into their vocabularies, and to consider nothing too high for human will to attain. So it is popularly said amongst ourselves that, if a man really determined to win it, he might wear the crown of England.

48.

Once in a famine a woman asked her husband to look after the *pot au feu* while she was going to fetch water. On her returning unobserved by him, she found that when skimming off the foam or scum he filled a calabash with it, and hid it somewhere, supposing it to be the best part of the food. The woman did not let him know that she had seen him play this trick. But at dinner, when the husband, trusting in what he had hid, said to her, "give me only a little, and let our children have plenty," she said to him, "*abantsa ate bilguro bigela gullemmi*" —father! do not call scum, harvest! He did not understand what this meant till he went to eat what he had put aside for himself, and, as might be expected, found the calabash empty.

49.

The question was once asked—"*Kamunyin koanganyin nduntsa ngubugo?*" *i.e.*, Who are more in number, the women or the men? One answered, "*Koangama ganago, kamuma ngubugo; ago kamuga nguburo tsedenate, koanga mana kamube pantsinte siga kamuro tamissagei, atemaro kamute ngubu,*" *i.e.*, Men are the minority, women are the majority; the reason why there are more women is this, that men who listen to what women say, are counted as women.

50.

The Fula once sent the following message to the governor of a town—"*Koa belama Tsarami Daduimate tegera tseba dugo andi siro keam yate dinye yeyogo!*"—literally, May Sarah's son, the governor of Dadui, make dumplings, till we come and bring him milk, and mash them, that we may drink together! This message refers to the Fula practice of mashing dumplings in milk and then drinking it: the meaning is, "Prepare thyself for war, and get dinner ready for us: we are about to attack and to defeat thee."

51.

On the other hand, the Burmese governor returned the following message to the Fula—"*Sandi koanga kwoya, isa, ngo beri denesgana, kalu tsagute, wua sandyua buiye!*"—literally, If they are men, let them come; behold, I have cooked meat, let them bring the sauce, that I and they may eat it. The meaning of this is, "I am prepared for war and battle: we will fight as soon as you come."

52.

Sintse tilo dinian, tilo lairan.

He has one foot in this world and one in the next.

N.B.—Meaning, he is in imminent danger: as we say, "He has one foot in the grave."

53.

Andi ngafo lukranben bonye.

We shall sleep behind the Koran.

N.B.—Meaning, "We shall feel more secure after an oath."

54.

Kalantselan dangi.

I stand on his head (i.e., *surpass him*).

N.B.—Kala, the head, is much used in phrases, *e. g.*, I see my head, *i.e.*, I think or deliberate; I lift up my head, *i.e.*, I am highly pleased; I take out a person's head, *i.e.*, I can deliver him; I hold a person's head, *i.e.*, I help or protect him. No. 59.

55.

Wute dabundon wu bago.

As for me, I shall not be in your midst.

N.B.—Meaning, "I will have nothing to do with you."

56.

Kargeni na tilon naptseni.

My heart did not sit down in one place (i.e., *I was uneasy, disquieted*).

57.

Tigini amtsi.

My skin is cold (i.e., *I am sad, grieved*).

58.

Tsi manaro *or* **Lebalaro yakeskin.**

I put my mouth into the matter or dispute (i.e., *I meddle with it*).

59.

Alla kamuro kalantse tsin.

Allah gives a woman her head.

N.B.—Meaning, God gives a safe delivery: so they say a woman has obtained her head, *i.e.*, has been safely confined. Also,

"*Kalani pandeski*" means, I have received my head, *i.e.*, I have escaped safely, I have been delivered. This expression is used especially in regard to the delivery of a woman in childbed, but also in regard to any other deliverance. Similarly, "Allah gives a person his head," *i.e.*, saves, rescues him: used by man referring to recovery from illness, return from battle, &c. See No. 54.

60.

Pesga gereskin.

I tie a face (i.e., *pull a long face, look displeased*).

61.

Manande ngalema tsaba tilon tsulugeni.

Our word never left one and the same road.

N.B.—Meaning, "We never fell out or disputed with one another."

62.

Sandi manantsa na tiloro tsasake.

They put their words in one and the same place.

N.B.—Meaning, "they are all of one mind."

63.

Afiyaye Allaye agemesagenate sitema ruiyen.

What Allah has decreed for us, that we shall see (i.e., *experience*).

64.

Allah artseki beiantse!

Allah give thee good luck.

N.B.—So also they say Allah bless thee—keep thee—grant thee long life.

65.

Alla barganem *or* Alla bargando (gotse).

May Allah take his blessing from you.

N.B.—A great curse.

66.

Bermade.

A bug: the Bornuese, like the pagans of Unyamwezi, consider the smell aromatic, and they suppose the aroma of Paradise and that of bugs to be of the same nature.

67.

Kam kalantsen nigawa besgero letsin bago.

One who has been three years married does not go to the Besge, or dancing place of young people.

68.

Ngadza.

A loup-garou, one who can transform himself into a hyæna, as in Abyssinia. According to M. Koelle's informant, there is a town in Gazir called Kabutiloa, in which every person possesses the gift of lycanthropy.

69.

Na dabu kambe.

One's native place (literally, where one's "dabu" or umbilical string was buried after birth).

70.

Dinia fatsar kamtsi.

The dawn has cut through—*i.e.*, day dawns. They

distinguish between *gubogum burgobe*, the first cock-crowing, between two and three in the morning, and *gubogum dcregebe*, the second cock-crowing near dawn.

71.

Dinia kau dabutsi.

The sun is in the centre of the world (i.e., *It is noon*).

72.

Ago gedintse bagote nemero, si aram.

It is forbidden to tell anything that has no foundation.

73.

Karge gereskin *or* **Karge taskin.**

I tie my heart, or I hold my heart (i.e., *I am composed, comforted*).

N.B.—*Karge*, or heart, occurs in many curious phrases, *e.g.*, the heart is cut, *i.e.*, courage is gone; the heart is sweet, *i.e.*, one is glad. A "black heart" is a bad heart.

74.

Meiram kirga koitsin bago.

A princess never makes a slave her friend.

75.

Kungana pingin.

To divine by cowrie shells, which are thrown on the ground, and which show futurity by the manner in which they fall.

76.

Lukran buskin.

I eat the Lukran (i.e., *Koran*).

N.B.—The Bornuese swear by placing the hand first upon the Koran and then upon forehead and breast.

77.

Ngudi pingin.

I take out poverty (i.e., *the guinea-worm*).

N.B.—The guinea-worm is called "poverty," because the disease always reappears at the beginning of the rains, thus preventing the sufferers from attending to their farms, and reducing them to destitution.

78.

Ngurtu kamawunga da tsogo tilon kotsena, kamawun gurtuga sila tsogo tilon kotsena.

A hippopotamus exceeds an elephant by one basket of flesh, and an elephant exceeds a hippopotamus by one basket of bones.

79.

Allabe rambuskin.

I pay what I owe to Allah.

N.B.—I pay the debt of nature—die.

80.

Serifu.

An albino, much feared for supernatural powers in Borneo. These men can have meat roasted on their naked arms, or plunge them into boiling water without injury.

81.

Nyamnyam.

A cannibal: this is a general and not a proper name, and the Nyamnyams have a king.

82.

Koliram or Kuriram.

A wood-demon or ghost, supposed to be of gigantic stature, with long flowing hair and pale skin like the Fulas. He lives in large hollow trees, from which he issues after sunset, at midnight, and before sunrise. If any one comes in his way, he salutes him with a fearful slap in the face—sometimes kills him. He often halloas as if to call people, but he never carries them away as the water-demon does. The Kuriram remarkably resembles the Rakshasa of the Hindoos.

83.

Ngamaram.

A water-demon, living in wells, cisterns, pools, rivers, and lakes, and in shape resembling a white man. These beings often catch people who fetch water after night has set in. If a male demon seizes a man, he slays him at once; if a woman, he keeps her for a month or a year, and then dismisses her. *V. v.*—a she-fiend kills the women and keeps the men alive.

III.

PROVERBS

IN

THE OJI TONGUE.

PROVERBS IN THE OJI TONGUE.

THE Oji, Ochi, or Otyi language is spoken throughout the empire of Ashante, which Englishmen know as Ashantee. To the south of Ashante again, and extending along the sea-coast, are their congeners, the Fante (Fantee), who use the same tongue, but with certain dialectic differences, rendering it less pure and agreeable to the ear than that of the inlanders. Besides these two large divisions, there are three small and non-maritime countries, eastward of Ashante, namely, Akim, Akwapim, and Akwamu, generally known as Akwambu, who are also Oji-speakers. They have, at times, been subdued by the overwhelming power of Ashante; but they are at present independent, and governed by their own chiefs and caboceers, under the protection of the English, who succeeded the Danes in that part of the coast. The idiom of Akim resembles that of its neighbour Ashante. Akwapim* lies to the east of Akim, and Akwamu to the north-east of Akwapim, bordering on the river Volta.

* This province is in about the meridian of Greenwich, and 6° N. lat. It is separated from the sea by Ga or Accra-land. The country is well wooded and mountainous, containing seventeen villages, each with its own chief, who owes a loose allegiance to the headman of Akropong.

All these are gold-producing lands, and when the present inexplicable state of apathy and degradation shall have passed away, they and their language will become of importance. The Oji is spoken by probably two millions of souls. The proverbs quoted below are borrowed from the work of the Rev. N. Riis.*

The two preceding collections are made from negroid races, and bear unmistakeable signs of Allah and the Koran. We now come to the purely Hamitic and Negro literature, in which occasionally a Moslem or a Christian sentiment can be seen dimly reflected. As the reader has been warned in the preface, a greater amount of illustration now becomes necessary.

* Grammatical Outline of the Oji Language, with especial Reference to the Akwapim Dialect; together with a Collection of Proverbs of the Natives, by Rev. H. N. Riis. Basel, Bahnmaier's Buchhandling (C. Detloff), 1854.

The collection of Mmebusem, or proverbs, is assisted by explanatory notes, which are inserted with a little pruning—generally a necessary operation in Teutonic "works"—and the orthography of the reverend author has been preserved. His Grammar is by no means so transcendental as that of the Rev. M. Zimmerman, and the Vocabulary is both useful and simple. It is hard to understand, however, why the reverend gentleman retains the obsolete letter C; and why in the order of letters Y should be promoted to precedence over K.

1.

Abe baakon na sei ensa.

One palm tree spoils the palm wine.

N.B.—Among the Oji the trees are felled—generally speaking, a number at a time—and a hole being cut in each, the juice distils into pots or bottles placed to receive it. The produce is removed twice a day, when the contents of the pots are all poured into a single large vessel. If one tree, therefore, has given bad wine, the whole will be spoiled. Thus we say, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

2.

Wo to adur-a ebi ka w'ano.

If you lay poison (i. e., *attempt to poison others*), some will touch *your* mouth.

3.

Abofra bo envaw, na ommo akekire.

A child may crush a snail, but it will not crush a tortoise.

N.B.—Means, do not attempt what is beyond your strength: little strength may effect objects within its sphere, but will prove vain beyond it.

4.

Abofra nte n'enna ni n'agya asem-a, odi aduan-a enkyinne nim.

If a child does not hear his mother's and his father's word, he (*shall*) eat food (*which*) salt is not in.

5.

Tekrema na kun onipa, na tekrema na gyai nipa.

The tongue kills man and the tongue saves man.

N.B.—So the Hindi proverb: The tongue may mount an elephant, or put the head in peril. The necessity of bitting and bridling the tongue is a favourite theme with the semi-civilised. Cf. The Proverbs of Scripture, chaps. vi., xii., xv., xviii., and James iii. 5.

6.

Woye abofra ensirow akotia.

If you are a child do not deride a short man.

N.B.—Because you do not know whether you may not, when grown up, be in the same predicament. Said of what the Greeks call Epichærekaki as opposed to the Epichæragathi.

7.

Onipa mfon kwa; okom enni no-a na, odi ekaw.

A man does not fast without a cause; if he does not suffer hunger, he is in debt.

8.

Asem monne fata hienni.

Hard words are fit for the poor.

9.

Sika ben wo-a, ehoa.

When gold comes near to you, it glistens.

N.B.—Means that an alluring object placed before the eyes stimulates desire. So we say "opportunity makes the thief."

10.

Onipa wonno no nna 'niara.

You do not always love (the same) man.

N.B.—Literally, "A man you do not love him all days;" meaning that friendship and love are things that sometimes change.

11.

Vode kokroko na di emmim-a, anka sinno beba fie.

If by bodily strength violence were committed, an elephant would come into the town.

N.B.—Meaning that if might, not law, prevail, the elephant, which is the strongest of beasts, would be master.

12.

Wonko bi afum da, wose: mi enku ni kuafo.

If you never went into another man's plantation, you would say, "I am the only planter."

N.B.—Meaning, that the home-dweller has homely wits, and that men are prone to judge of all things from what happens under their own eyes.

13.

Didime na yi bronni nansin adi.

A feast uncovers a European's wooden leg.

N.B.—Didime is a feast of course followed by a "big drink," which—"in vino veritas"—makes people forget self-respect, and exposes defects which are usually concealed. Bronni or Bro (in the Ga language Blofo) something or somebody European, is probably derived from Abro, Maize or Indian corn, for a reason to be quoted, in the Ga proverbs. Abrokirri, "Europe," is, however, explained by Mr. Riis as, perhaps, a corruption of "Portugal."

14.

Tapo ni abanm.

There is not a halfpenny in his palace.

N.B.—The "Tapo" is twenty cowries, or two farthings. "Aban" is a house built of stone, a castle or palace opposed to "dan," the negro square or oblong hut of clay-plastered sticks roofed with grass or palm leaves. The proverb alludes to pride and poverty, and also answers to our "great cry and little wool." The Hindis say, there is not a thread in the house, and the blockhead wants a turban.

15.

Dabi otenten benya, akotia nnya.

(*This time the short one has got it, but*) another time the long one will get it, and the short one will not get it (i. e., *the object of their common pursuit*).

N.B.—Meaning, that fortune is fickle; celeres quatit alas.

16.

Wonyi m'aye-a, ensei me din.

If you do not praise me, do not spoil my name (*or character*).

17.

Akekire se, ensa ko na ensa ba.

The tortoise says, The hand goes and the hand comes.

N.B.—Less literally "if you draw back your hand (i. e., *give me no presents*), I draw back mine." It means, as you behave to me so shall I behave to you. Mr. Riis remarks, "it is a peculiar feature of the Oji proverbs that they are often referred to animals." Cf. 27, 33, 89, 90, 118, 120, 188, &c. The "peculiarity" may, I believe, be extended to the proverbs of all semi-civilised peoples.

18.

Ohi enni ni yonku.

A poor man has no friend.

19.

Obi nnoa aduan, enko ta enkwanta, enfyufye menni.

Nobody cooks food and places it in the road to seek a guest.

N.B.—Meaning, do not invert the order of things: begin with the beginning.

20.

Yenim se mogya vo yen anom, na yefi entesu.

We know there is blood in our mouth, but we throw out spittle.

N.B.—Though it is a fact that our mouth is lined with blood, yet we eject saliva only: we do not give away all, we keep the best things for our own use. Charity begins at home.

21.

Obi nko toa hahinni vo ne bon ano, na onse nse; wo hu bon.

Nobody assails a Hahinni at the door of his nest, and says to him, you stink.

N.B.—The Hahinni is a large black fetid ant. The proverb means "every man's house is his castle,"—a truer saying in Africa than in England.

22.

Biribi ni wo ensem-a, emmua no, na mmofra ntiti eki.

If there is nothing in your hand do not shut it, and let the children pick outside.

N.B.—The closed hand would denote that it contains a present, and thus cause disappointment if found to be empty. The proverb means, "Do not tantalise others:" "do not excite hopes or give promises which you do not intend to fulfil."

23.

Efe, ne enye aniberre.

It is fine, but excites no desire.

N.B.—Said of persons and things which, with brilliant qualities, unite so many drawbacks, that they become objects of aversion rather than of desire.

24.

Wonim tu-a, tu wo dyon.

If you can pull out, pull out your own grey hairs.

N.B.—Attend to your own faults before you reprehend others; remove the beam from your own eye, before remarking the mote in your brother's.

25.

Wanya wohu-a, to wo pon mu da.

If you are rich, always shut your door.

N.B.—In Ashante, Dahome, and Benin, the reputation of wealth must be carefully avoided.

26.

Ka akekire enni envaw enku-a, anka otuo nto vo wuram da.

If there were only snails and tortoises, no gun would ever be fired in the jungle.

N.B.—Because snails and tortoises can be caught without a gun: ways and means must be proportioned to the object in view.

27.

Oduacen se, nea 'ko ne yem no, enni nede, na nea vo n'afonnom no, enye nedea.

The monkey says, that which has gone into his belly is his; but what is in his mouth is not his.

N.B.—Any external possession is uncertain, however well secured.

28.

Biribi enkyen ogya koko.

There is nothing more red (*or so red as*) fire.

29.

Obi nkyerre bi nse: to enkyienne di.

A person will not say to another, buy salt (*and*) eat.

N.B.—It is folly to command or to exhort another in matters which his own necessities will compel him to undertake.

30.

Wo ensa dam-a, vonni engyaw.

If your hand is in (*the dish*) they eat not, leave not.

N.B.—Meaning, they eat not so as to leave nothing for you; you are sure of getting your share. West Africans feed with their fingers from the common pot or dish around which they are seated.

31.

Ohia na ma odece ye akoa.

Poverty makes a free man become a slave.

32.

Asum vo "soa mi."

At the watering place they say, "Lift for (i. e. *help*) me!"

N.B.—The "Asum" is a place where water gathers: it here represents the Asiatic well and the English pump. The women fetch the necessary and each assists the other to lift the full pot upon her head, such being the usual way of carrying it home. The proverb probably means "In the every day affairs of life the want of mutual assistance is felt."

33.

Nwansana se: nea 'ka ekirri na, edoso.

Saith the fly, "What is left behind is a great deal."

N.B.—This alludes to the fly trimming itself with its hind legs, which it continues as long as it considers that something is left to be done. The proverb exhorts men not to weary of any labour, until they have carried out their purposes.

34.

Akoko di wo yonku aivu-a, pam no; dabi obedi wode.

When a fowl eats your neighbour's corn, drive it away; another time it will eat yours.

35.

Wode kokrobeti ko ayi-a, vode sotorre buaw.

If you go to customs with your thumb (*stretched out*), they will answer you with blows.

N.B.—"Ayi" is a public festival celebrated with processions, dancing, drumming, shooting, and drinking, which cause the streets to be crowded. "Customs" is the Anglo-African corruption of the Portuguese "Costume," way, habit. To stretch forth the thumb at a person is a sign of mockery and contempt. The proverb corresponds with the French "Le moine répond comme l'abbé chante."

36.

Ayisa vame ana, ose; woma mi se woma wo ba, anka mame.

The orphan (*when asked*) whether he had enough, said, "If you had given to me as you gave to your (*own*) child, I should have had enough."

37.

Wo yem ye-a, womfa wo yirre nkye.

If you are good-natured, you will not give away your wife.

N.B.—A good man should be thoroughly attached to his family.

38.

Abofra eni anso panyin-a, ofre empopa se haha.

If the child does not honour the aged, it will call a palm branch "haha."

N.B.—"Haha" is a word of no signification. The proverb means that a child so perverse as to withhold respect from his seniors, would be capable of any absurdity.

39.

Opete, wodi bi bin, na obi nni wode.

Vulture! thou eatest anybody's egesta, but nobody eats thine.

N.B.—This is addressed to sycophants and parasites, who seek feasts and presents from others without ever making a return.

40.

Hamma hamma kyirre ketebo.

String (*added to*) string will bind even a leopard.

N.B.—Meaning, that united strength and repeated efforts will effect great things. Gutta cavat lapidem.

41.

Obi nto akokonini, na ommon obi akura.

One does not buy a cock, and he does not crow in one's plantation.

N.B.—Meaning, nobody buys a cock, and lets him crow in another man's field.

42.

Obaifo rekoe! Obaifo rekoe! na wonye baifo-a, wontya wo eni.

(*When the cry is raised*) "There goes a witch! There goes a witch!" if you are no witch you will not turn round.

N.B.—"Baifo," from "bayi," sorcery, means wizard or witch: the saying corresponds with our insinuation touching the cap fitting.

43.

Onipa reba, wonse nse, bera.

When a man is coming, you will not say "Come!"

N.B.—As we say, "Don't spur a willing horse."

44.

Wo se enye-a, nea wota foro ekirri, ara nen.

Though your teeth are bad, they are just what you lick.

N.B.—Though your friends and relations, or neighbours and fellow-citizens, are disagreeable people, do not drop all intercourse with them.

45.

Sasa bonsam ko ayi-a, osoe baifo fi.

When the fiend goes to the Sabbat (*or customs*), he lodges with the sorcerer.

N.B.—"Sasabonsam," earth-devil, from "asase," earth, and "abonsam," a fiend,* is a monstrous being, living in the deepest

* Missionaries translate Abonsam, the Devil, "conceived to be an evil spirit living in the upper regions (our popular heaven) and reigning in Abonsam Kru (in Accra, Abonsam-dse) over the spirits (or rather the shades) of wicked men." It is probably some evil ghost who has obtained a general bad name. The Sasa Abonsam corresponds after a fashion with the Erdgeist, the Wald-teufel and the Kobold of the Germans.

recesses of the forest, hostile to man, especially priestly man, but intimate with wizard and witch. The proverb means "Birds of a feather flock together," "Like for like, and Nan for Nicholas;" or, as the Persians say,

"Like flies with like,
Pigeon with pigeon, hawk with hawk."

46.

Ogya ni atodru nna.

Fire and gunpowder do not lie together.

N.B.—So we say of oil and water.

47.

Osram emfi da korro, entya manm.

The moon does not appear on one day, does not pass over the town.

N.B.—Meaning, when the new moon appears, it does not pass over the town the same day, a work is not completed as soon as begun. Rome was not built in a day. "Petit à petit l'oiseau fait son nid."

48.

Osu to, na vonyiyi ade vo sum-a, enye von ni bo.

When rain falls, and they must remove the things in the rain, it is not them and (*or together with*) the stones.

N.B.—Meaning, that you do not remove the stones with the things. The proverb is applied to those who o'erstep the modesty of nature, who, in doing a useful and necessary action, add to it what is useless and unnecessary.

49.

"Vontu enkinne! Vontu enkinne!" na yereda entu.

"They shall pull us! they shall pull us!" then we shall sleep without fire.

N.B.—Meaning, when they cry out, "Throw it away! Throw it (*the smoking piece of wood*) away!" we shall lie freezing. West

Africans who have scanty clothing sleep by the side of a fire during the colder nights of the year. When troubled by the smoke, they order a slave, or some one handy, to remove the cause of offence. If, however, this be done too often, the fire will disappear, and the cold will become more troublesome than the smoke was. The proverb warns men to choose the lesser of two evils, not to incur the risk of a greater, for the purpose of ridding oneself of the smaller, trouble.

50.

Obi ntya akoko ano, emma akye.

Any (*person*) does not get a-head of the cock, does not give salutation.

N.B.—Less literally, "nobody says good morning before the cock," *i. e.*, no one will go out before cockcrow, and bid his friends good morning. Everything must be done in due season.

51.

Kwaterrekwa se obema wo entama, tie ne din.

When a rascal says that he will give you a coat, hear (i. e., *inquire for*) his name.

N.B.—Meaning, before you trust him, seek information about him. And generally, be careful whom you trust, particularly where there is just cause of suspicion.

52.

Mi-a, mida-'yanya, minhu nyankupon,* na wo wobutu ho.

I who lie on my back do not see the sky, and you are lying on your belly.

N.B.—Meaning, if one who has the best opportunities of effecting an object cannot succeed, they who have fewer advantages must expect to fail.

* Nyankupon in Akwapim and Onyame in Ashante, and equivalent to Nyonmo in the Ga or Accra language, signify the Supreme

53.

Obi mpra, na obi nsesaw.

When one sweeps another does not carry away (*the sweepings*).

N.B.—Literally, "A person does not sweep, and another does not take up," *i. e.*, the same person must do both. So the European proverbs, "Quod quisque introivit, ipsi est excedendum:" As you make your bed so you must lie. "Comme on fait son lit on se couche."

Being. The word is usually derived from "Yonku" and "pon," *i. e.*, greatest friend. Such at least is the composition explained by Mr. J. Beecham (Ashantee and the Gold Coast, pp. 171 and 172). Of this Mr. Riis remarks, "there can be no doubt, that these derivations (alluding also to 'Nyame' being derived from 'ye,' to make, to create) are futile, being based on a misapprehension of the proper phonetical form of the words: besides the explanations of Nyankupon by 'greatest friend,' stand in direct opposition with the notions of the Supreme Being entertained by the negroes. What may be said with some degree of certainty is that Nyankupon is a compound of 'nyanku' and 'pon.' 'Pon' seems, from its occurrence in other words, to signify great or high. The derivation of 'nyanku' is uncertain, but very probably 'nyame' and 'nyanku' are from the same root, and but two different forms. Their root is perhaps 'nyan,' to awake, supposing the original meaning of this verb to be to rise, to raise; so that 'nyanku' and 'nyame' in their primary signification would be synonymes of 'Sorro,' the high, that which is above. Pon is added for emphasis, so that the meaning of Nyankupon would be the very high, the Most High. This hypothesis would easily account for the frequent use of both words in the material sense of sky or firmament, God being identified with the visible expanse of the heavens, as in English 'heaven'—so the Chinese use 'Tien'—is sometimes said instead of God." This derivation will appear to many as hard to swallow as Mr. Beecham's.

Mr. Riis (sub voc. Nyankupon) also remarks that this Supreme Being is conceived by the negroes of the Oji tribe as a great spirit living above, the author of all good, eternal and omnipotent, to whom the creation of the world and the natural phenomena of the atmosphere, as thunder, lightning, and rain, are ascribed, and by whom the spirits of good men deceased are conveyed to live under his dominion in

54.

Akosua mmo musu, na Akua mfa.

Akosua does not mischief, and Akua does not take (*it*).

N.B.—Less literally, when Akosua does mischief, Akua is not punished for it. Meaning, "No one should suffer for the sins of another."

55.

Okom di wo-a, womfa wo ensa abien nnidi.

Though you are hungry, you do not eat with both hands.

N.B.—Meaning, "However pressing be the necessity, it must be kept within the bounds of propriety."

56.

Da se 'nne enti na vaye aivurow.

For the sake of a day like to-day they have made the nails.

N.B.—Less literally, "for a day like the present the nails are made." This is a threat of future revenge. Meaning, "I, too, have

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Nyankuponfi or Nyankuponkru. On the other hand, however, he is considered too high above earth to care for the affairs of man, thus perfectly agreeing with Pliny, Lib. 2, chap. 5 :—"It is ridiculous to suppose that the great head of all things, whatever it be, pays any regard to human affairs." The negro deity even has committed them to Bosom (vulg. Bossum), imaginary beings worshipped by the negroes and called "Fetishes" by Europeans. Mr. Riis concludes with saying—"The idea of him as a supreme spirit is obscure and uncertain, and often confounded with the visible heavens or sky, the upper world (sorro) which lies beyond human reach ; and hence the same word is used also for heavens, sky, and even for rain and thunder."

It is easy to discover the traces of a belief in the Deity, an idea doubtless derived by the West African negroes in olden times from the Portuguese. I have elsewhere recorded my belief that their conception of a God is physical, not metaphysical.

the power of injuring, and will at some time repay you for my present injury."

57.

Hai! hai! na 'mma akroma 'nye kese.

(*The cry of*) Hai! Hai! has not suffered the hawk to grow big.

N.B.—"Hai," is an interjection used in frightening off birds of prey. The proverb means, if the hawk had been allowed to eat his fill of fowl and chicken, he would have become stronger and more dangerous: if evil were left unrestrained we should soon be overpowered by it.

58.

Nea ogwan do na, ode ne fufu sie.

A sheep puts his white (*wool*) on his favourite places.

N.B.—Literally, "What a sheep loves (*there*) he puts his white." The sheep is supposed to be spotted, and the white is considered prettier than the black. The meaning is, you will bestow your best upon those you love.

59.

Obi ye ne biribi-a, muma onye, na owu ben.

When a person does his something (i. e., *his business*), let him do it, for death is coming on.

N.B.—Meaning, let every one do what he pleases, as life is short, it is little matter how he acts, all will be the same a hundred years hence; it is a characteristic negro sentiment, showing their indolence, nonchalance, and improvidence.

60.

Mahu kontromfi-a, ne yirr 'awu, na vasiw atimun; na wo vansan de, wofa hu den?

I have seen a baboon (cynocephalus), whose wife was

dead, and he wore long hair; but thou, antelope, what is that to thee?

N.B.—The hair is allowed to grow long in sign of mourning, and the proverb appears to be directed against improper meddling with the affairs of others.

61.

Akwanmusem dew enti na vofi entesu to ensueni-a, aka befa ko.

When in consequence of good news spittle is thrown upon the surface of the water, the "aka" will snatch it up.

N.B.—The "aka" is a river fish: the meaning of the proverb is obscure.

62.

Wo ura tan wo-a na, ofre wo akoa dece.

If your master hates you, he calls you a free man.

N.B.—Addressed to a slave: by the act of hating you, your master declares you to be free, for nobody hates his own property.

63.

Hu m' eni so mam enti na atyo abien nam.

For the sake of "blow upon my eye for me," two antelopes walk.

N.B.—Less literally, "that the one may blow upon the other's eye, two antelopes walk in company." It means, that in case of one of them getting dust into his eye, the other will remove it by blowing upon it. The general idea conveyed by the proverb is, that associations are formed for the sake of mutual support.

64.

Obi nhu bi koaberan, encru nsi.

Nobody jumps (*for joy*) on seeing a strong slave of another.

N.B.—Meaning, that you do not rejoice at an advantage in which you yourself have no share.

65.

Obi nto nantyu namon.

Nobody will buy the footprints of a bullock.

N.B.—The footprints of a bullock here representing anything that cannot be turned to use.

66.

Vose: manya,—na vonse nse: yanya.

You say, "I have,"—not, "We have."

N.B.—Meaning, that one man is master of a family, not several persons at once.

67.

Obi do w'a na, oserre wo hu ade.

If any one loves you, he will beg of you.

N.B.—Begging is a sign of love, because, according to West African ideas, friendship consists in mutually giving and receiving presents.

68.

Dua bata bo, eye tya na.

A piece of wood lying close to a stone, it is good to cut (i.e., *it will bear a blow*).

N.B.—Meaning, that it is good enough, or strong enough, to bear being cut, to resist a stroke. The idea implied is, "Even the feeble may be rendered powerful by leaning upon those that can support them."

69.

W'agya akoa tya dua, ose; eye merow.

When your father's slave is chopping wood, he says it is soft.

N.B.—If he said it is hard, it would sound like a complaint offensive t his master, and likely to produce evil consequences.

West Africans are astute in practising, regardless of truth, the rule laid down in this proverb, viz., "Accommodate your tongue to time and circumstance."

70.

Wosen mi adidi-a, misen wo nna.

If you surpass me in eating, I surpass you in sleeping.

N.B.—Meaning, do not think that you alone possess all the talents: if you surpass others in one respect, you are deficient in another.

71.

Wopata adaban abien ce gyem-a, baakon cew.

If you put two pieces of iron together in the fire, one will be burned.

N.B.—This is addressed to a blacksmith: if he puts two pieces of iron into the fire at the same time, one will be burned while he is engaged in hammering the other. The meaning is, in performing a work, its different parts must be taken in hand in due order; haste, instead of furthering, will defeat its own object.

72.

Se nea atoa te na, boha te.

As the sword is, so is the scabbard.

N.B.—The idea to be conveyed probably is, that two persons associating together may be supposed to be alike in manners and principles. As we say, Tell me what your friends are, and I will tell you what you are.—"Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es."

73.

Ayonkugorr' enti na okoto nnya ti.

In consequence of friends-playing the crab has no head.

N.B.—Friends-playing means feasting, drinking, dancing, gambling, and similar entertainments, at one's own expense. The

crab is said to have no head, because that member does not project from the body, and the animal is supposed in the proverb to have lost it by "ayonkugorro," or junketing. A warning is thus enforced against dissipation, by pointing to its evil consequences. To comprehend the bearing of such admonition, it must be remembered that West Africans, besides being hard drinkers, are desperate gamblers, who will stake not only their property but their families and themselves. This probably was of more frequent occurrence than at present, during the old slave-trading days of the Gold Coast, yet I have heard of it throughout Africa: in Unya mwezi, during my visit there, a negro staked his aged mother against a cow.

74.

Wohu koto eni-a, wose; eye dua.

When you see the eyes of a crab, you will say they are splinters of wood.

N.B.—Being placed on pedicles or stalks, they are compared to splinters. The proverb corresponds with our "Appearances are deceitful."—"Il ne faut pas juger les gens sur la mine."

75.

Esonno afon-a, wongwa no berow so.

Though an elephant be thin, yet you will not carve it on a palm-leaf.

N.B.—The idea to be conveyed is, that the great and noble, though in a fallen state, are different from those of mean and servile origin, and will not submit to unbecoming treatment.

76.

Broferr'a nnya 'mmerre sorro, na nnya nye de.

A papaw-fruit that has not yet ripened on high (i.e., *on the tree*) is not yet sweet.

N.B.—Meaning, the good qualities of a person or thing cannot appear before going through the usual stages of development, which lead gradually to a state of perfection.

77.

Wobo aberriki-a na, wohu ne ura fi kwan.

If you beat a goat you will find his master's home's way (i.e., *the way to its master's house*).

N.B.—Because, goats when frightened try to run home. The meaning seems to be, "The farthest way about is often the nearest way home;" or, "Ingenuity will devise many ways to attain its ends."

78.

Wope aka asem akyere Nyankupon-a na, wokakyerre emframa.

If you want to tell anything to Heaven, tell it to the wind.

N.B.—The meaning of this saying seems to be the same as that of 77.

79.

Nea womferre no, okoto nea woferre no eki.

He whom you do not respect, will seat himself behind him whom you do respect.

N.B.—In order to seek his protection when you are about to assail him. The feeble lean for support on the strong.

80.

Eniwa fufu nkum anuma.

A white eye does not kill a bird.

N.B.—A white eye means a glance of hatred or ill-will. The meaning is, looks may be menacing, but they cannot hurt you.

81.

Aboa kokoseki kasa kyerre bonukyerre fo-a, ote.

When the animal vulture speaks to the big drum he (*the latter*) hears it.

N.B.—The "kokoseki," or "pete," is the turkey-buzzard, one of the most useful birds in West Africa, feeding on carrion, and, therefore, most sacred to the Fetish. The "bonukyerre," or "boma," is a long but narrow drum, garnished with the skulls of hostile chiefs, and daubed with the blood of human sacrifices: its hollow sounds are heard on all state occasions, and, besides being sacred, it is supposed to be initiated in the mysteries of Fetishism. Hence the meaning seems to be, that members of the secret brotherhoods, of which many exist in West Africa, understand one another, and can communicate by means unknown to the multitude.

82.

Tekrema kro cia tekrena apim-a, eto piti.

If one tongue meets a thousand tongues, it faints.

83.

Obrofotefo na oma bronni ye aye.

The European-understander (i.e., *he who can speak with the European*) may induce him to do good.

N.B.—Meaning, may persuade him to give presents, the object ever held in view by West Africans in their intercourse with white men. The proverb informs us, that to get all possible profit out of a person or thing, one must know him or it thoroughly.

84.

Eti ntetew-a, wongyai ekyow soa.

If (*your*) head is not torn to pieces, you do not leave off wearing a hat.

N.B.—As long as you live you follow the fashion.—"Out of the fashion, out of the world."

85.

Ni odidi me ose: ni odidi anadyo, oye baifo.

He who has done eating will say, "He who eats at night is a sorcerer."

N.B.—Meaning, that a person out of all temptation, is apt to judge harshly the failings of his neighbours.

86.

Obi mmua n'ano onnifo.

Nobody shuts (*or shall shut*) his mouth who is innocent.

87.

Dua baakon gye enframa, ebu.

One tree receiving (*all*) the wind, breaks.

N.B.—If the whole force of the wind shaking the forest were directed against one tree, it would overthrow it: collective strength will be triumphant in cases where single resistance would be vain. So the Esopian fable of the old man and the bundle of sticks. There is no people more keenly alive to the advantages of combination than the West African, and it has long served to defend the negro against more highly intellectual races.

88.

Kontromfi se: oberan wu ne koko.

The kontromfi says, "A strong man dies only from his chest being hurt."

N.B.—The "kontromfi," or cynocephalus, is the largest and strongest ape found on the Gold Coast;* in the proverb it repre-

* M. Riis translates "kontromfi" by "chimpanzee;" this, however, appears erroneous. M. Zimmermann says, "a large kind of monkey (Hunds-affe?)." The latter is more probable, as the dog-faced baboon is a far fiercer and more dangerous animal than the troglodytes, and West Africa is full of stories concerning the attacks of these ferocious

sents a man "validus juventâ"—in the full enjoyment and consciousness of his strength, who in battle disdains a wound, unless his breast, supposed to be the seat of life, is dangerously hurt.

89.

Kontromfi se, me suman ni m' eni.

The baboon says, "My charm is my eye."

N.B.—West Africans are ever provided with "suman"—"medicines for eye," charms or amulets to defend them from sorcerers, enemies, and dangerous ghosts. The proverb remarks that a brave man will trust for his security to his own strength and vigilance.

90.

Adarre bo bo-a, nankasa na tua.

When a hook beats a stone, itself (*must*) suffer.

N.B.—Compare with the fable of the earthen pot and the iron pot.

91.

Nea oko asu na obo ahinna.

He who fetches water breaks the pot.

N.B.—When the water-pot comes to grief, it is more likely to be broken by the person who went with it for water, not by one who had nothing to do with it at the time.

92.

Voton wo-a, wonto tuo.

If you (*yourself*) are sold, you do not buy a gun.

N.B.—Because one born a freeman is not sold unless he be deeply indebted, and unable either to pay or to prevail upon others to pay for him.

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brutes upon women and even villages. As yet, however, we know so little concerning the anthropoid apes of Africa, that "kontromfi," like the Yoruban Nake, may be some new and fierce species resembling the gorilla.

93.

Osukwase anuma nko di Krobo aivu, na vonkyirre Santeni entua ekaw.

When a fowl from Osukwase eats the corn of Krobo, they do not seize a man from Ashante and make him refund the damage.

N.B.—Literally, "An Osukwase bird does not go to eat the Krobo corn, and they do not catch an Ashante man, pays not the debt." Osukwase and Krobo are names of towns. Like No. 54, this means that no one should suffer for the sins of another.

94.

Woko asu amma, vommisa ahinna.

When you go to (*fetch*) water and do not return, they do not enquire about the pot.

N.B.—They ask after *you:* a trifling loss is not thought of when it is accompanied by a heavy calamity.

95.

Ensu fa Kramo-a, vommisa n'adurade.

When water takes a Moslem (i.e., *when he is drowned*), they do not enquire about his dress.

N.B.—"Kramo" and "Kramofo" are Oji words for a Moslem. The proverb has the same meaning as No. 94.

96.

Wofa abarrima kwanm-a, wo sekan yera.

If you make friends on the road, your knife will be lost.

N.B.—A warning against sudden friendships with strangers, who may prove deceivers and thieves: a neglect of this amongst the Asiatics doubtless fostered, if it did not create, the system known in England as "Thuggee."

97.

Nea n'eni aberre, vommo n'eni su.

He whose eyes are red, they do not beat upon his eyes.

N.B.—Red eyes signify rage, and the meaning is, that to vex one already vexed is "oleum addere camino"—to add fuel to fire. The Oji tongue has originally but three words for simple colours: "Tuntrum," black; "fufu," white; and "koko," red, ruddy, yellowish, or brownish-red. Bru for blue has been borrowed from the English. See also No. 208.

98.

Nea okum Tabirifo na, ofa n'entokota.

(The executioner) who kills Tabirifo, gets his shoes.

N.B.—"Tabirifo" is the proper name of a man of note in Ashante, who was publicly executed. The proverb means, he who does the work should receive the reward.

99.

Nea ovo aka no, osurro sunson.

He whom a serpent has bitten dreads a slow-worm.

N.B.—Sunson is a harmless reptile, believed by West Africans to be blind. The meaning of the proverb is substantially the same as our saying, "The burnt child dreads the fire;" or, "The thief doth fear each bush an officer;" but more strongly expressed, signifying that a person who has been injured will not only dread the identical cause or author of his affliction, but even the mere appearance of it. The Hindi proverb is, "He who is bitten by a snake will start at the sight of a rope; also, "The leaf crackled, and your slave fled."

100.

Nea vahu bi pen, se voki.

They who have seen a thing once, say they loathe it.

N.B.—Meaning, that you may have too much of a good thing —"ne quid nimis."

101.

Asafo eni-sa akura.

Troops select farm-houses (viz., *for attack*).

N.B.—"Akura" is a hamlet in a plantation, where the owner keeps his family and his slaves. It is opposed to "kru" (croom) or "man," the town, which is the common centre of a number of plantation hamlets, scattered over a large extent of country. The English croom used for a Gold Coast village is an ignorant corruption of "kru-mu" or "krum," "in the village." The meaning of the proverb is, the point of attack will be where there is the least resistance and the most "loot."

102.

Wo hu eden-a, wonye ba enu adyuma.

Though strong you will not do the work of two.

N.B.—Meaning, that the strength of Hercules or Goliah has its limits.

103.

Akoko eni so brofua.

A fowl selects a single grain (viz., *from a heap of rubbish*).

N.B.—Meaning, that what is good and profitable must be selected from the trash: the smallest thing useful must not be despised.

104.

Atyo abien borro vu.

Two small antelopes beat a big one.

N.B.—"Tyo" is a small animal: "vu" or "bobiri" a larger species. The adage means, "Union is strength."

105.

Opanyin due "mante, mante."

A grandee (*or elder*) practises, "I have not heard! I have not heard!"

N.B.—Meaning forbearance. The "empanyin" (*plur.*) are the elders of a town, forming the council of the caboceer or chief, each having his particular charge, as the "safohinne" or military chief, the "fotosanfo" or treasurer, the "kyami" or spy and speaker—king's mouth"—the "bofo," messenger, and others; a system much resembling that of the village republics in Maharatta-land. The meaning of the proverb is, "It does not become the dignified and venerable man to notice every light word and deed."

106.

Nea vode enkokonte se vobedi semmina, wongye n'akingye.

If the eaters of enkokonte say they eat soap, you do not doubt it.

N.B.—"Enkokonte" is a food resembling native soap: sometimes a man eating it, says waggishly, that he is eating soap. If the person addressed took the assertion in good earnest, he would appear a fool. Hence the meaning seems to be, "A joke must be understood as such, not as a serious matter."

107.

Wo ni wo agya akoa tya abe-a, ofre wo ave.

When you cut down a palm-tree with the slave of your father, he will call you friend.

N.B.—If you are intimate with your inferiors, they will lose respect for you. Mr. Riis observes that the saying is akin to, though not so strongly expressed as, the English proverb, "You cannot touch pitch without being defiled." It is almost equivalent to our saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

108.

Mogya mpa ten tirri mu da.

Blood is never wanting in the horsefly's head.

N.B.—Because the horsefly's business is to suck blood. The proverb is equivalent to, "A robber's den will never be found empty of stolen goods."

109.

Akura te se nantyu-a, aginamo 'akoa nen.

Though a mouse were (*as big*) as a bullock, yet it would be the slave of the cat.

N.B.—A born slave, however he may rise in the world, will ever retain a servile mind.

110.

Atodru asa, enye vonni Akowua entoam.

When the powder is gone, it is not that in Akowua's powder-case.

N.B.—Meaning, "When they say all the powder is consumed, they do not include the private store of Akowua," one of the Ashante kings: though others may be in want, he is probably supplied.—"Nulla regula sine exceptione."

111.

Osunson se, obenyin ansa na vafi eni; onyini, na ode ne ti pempem.

The blind-worm said he would grow before he got his eyes; he is grown, but (*still*) he wriggles his head about (i.e., *to find his way*).

N.B.—He is still blind. The meaning is, that youth is the time for study, and if this be neglected, old age will rue it.

112.

Otumfo vro ka-a, ovro fa wo meti.

When a strong man pushes your ring, he pushes it to the shoulder.

N.B.—"Ka" is a finger-ring, or, as in this place, a wrist-ring. The meaning of the saying is, that a man's character impresses itself upon all his actions.

113.

Eni baakon enfye kra, enfye asibe.

One eye does not look (*at the same time*) on a monkey and on a baboon.

N.B.—The "krá" and the "asibe" are different species of the Simiadæ. The proverb means, "You cannot do two things at the same time."

114.

Batafo se, enye n'ano, enye n'ano, na n'ano ara nen.

The hog says, "It is not my mouth! it is not my mouth! (*that has ruined the plantation*);" but still it *is* his mouth.

N.B.—The word of a rascal must not be depended upon; one who will commit a crime will also deny it.

115.

Wonim di-a, di bi, na nni 'niara.

If you eat, eat a portion, but do not eat all.

N.B.—"Sit modus in rebus:" in the application of any power, observe moderation.

116.

Eniwa nnim avirreho.

The eye knows nothing of grief.

N.B.—Meaning, it will close in spite of your sorrow: bodily wants must be satisfied, whatever be the matter with the mind.

117.

Dua ananse adi awu, entekuma entra ase, entonkom.

The entekuma will not sit down nor sleep under the very tree, from eating of which the ananse died.

N.B.—"Entekuma" and "ananse" are two different kinds of arachnida: the latter, as amongst the Ga people, is a mythic personage, generally called "Agya Ananse," or Father Spider. Great skill and ingenuity are attributed to him, probably from observing the wonders of the web; and the people are rich in "anansisem" or Spider stories. The meaning of the proverb is, "You will do well to avoid a thing, person, or step, which has been fatal to friend or relative."

118.

Obusmaketew se: entem eye na ogum eye.

The chameleon says, "Speed is good, and slowness is good."

N.B.—Meaning, each is good in its proper time and place.

119.

Ohienni nya ade-a, oman bo.

When a man becomes rich, the town goes to ruin.

N.B.—The parvenu becomes insolent under prosperity.—"Honores mutant mores."—"Asperius nihil est humili cùm surgit in altum." The Hindi proverb is, "When he had filled his belly he began to vex the poor."

120.

Akikire se: obarrima mferr' agwan.

The tortoise says, A man must not be ashamed to run away (i.e., *when flight is necessary*).

N.B.—So the well-known Hudibrastic lines—

"He who fights and runs away,
Shall live to fight another day."

In the African proverb the words are attributed to the tortoise—the slowest of all animals, and the least likely to profit by flight—in order to make them more emphatical.

121.

Pani nim pam-a, anka ne to nna tokru.

If a needle could sew, it would not have a hole on its back.

N.B.—This refers to the censorious, who, if really reformers, would begin by ridding themselves of their own defects.

122.

Wotya wo tekrema so toto vi-a na, wonnya nam.

If you cut off from your tongue and roast and eat it, you have no meat.

N.B.—Meaning, you have gained nothing by this proceeding; you have acquired nothing that you had not before. This saying is pointed at persons who carry on law-suits against members of their own family.

123.

Wode wo ba to Wuawu-a, owu.

If you call your child "Death," it will die.

N.B.—Because, so to call a child would be as it were a challenge to Death by marking it as his property. Hence, the proverb means, "He who wantonly risks a disaster will be visited with it ere long."

124.

Odonko nya ade-a, obodam.

When the Donko * becomes rich he runs mad.

N.B.—Similar to No. 119, and representing the beggar on horseback riding to the devil.

125.

Esonno tia afiri so-a, enhwan.

When an elephant treads upon a spring-trap, it (*the trap*) does not spring up.

N.B.—But it does when a bird treads upon it. The proverb means, "The same act performed, or word spoken, by different persons, may produce different effects."

* Donko is the name given to the countries and tribes north of Ashante, about the Upper Volta—the so-called Kong Mountains—and the basin of the Kwara, or Western Niger. Thus it would comprise the mostly Moslem people of Hausa and Bornu, the Fulas and Mandengas, besides the Kafirs of Akyem, Akwamu, and Ayigbe. The land is represented as being well cultivated with wheat and corn, and abounding in elephants, tortoises, horses, asses, and camels; moreover, the Sahara and the European natives dwelling beyond it are known to the people. The Donko slaves are captured by the Ashantes and are sold on the coast, where they are held to be an inferior race, being mostly caught when adult and unable to learn new tongues fluently. They speak, of course, many different dialects, so that "Donko" cannot be used as the name of any particular language. Some describe them as mild and industrious. M. Riis limits Odonko to "a negro tribe in the more interior parts of Western Africa, which furnishes the Oji tribe with most of their slaves; the word is therefore equivalent to servile, with the addition, however, that a Donko is considered also as naturally dull and stupid. By a sudden change of fortune he would be so puffed up with conceit as to have his head turned by the emotion."

126.

Okoto ba nvo anuma.

The crab's daughter does not bear a bird.

N.B.—The offspring follows the parent. Cf. Matth. vii. 16—18, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The Accra proverb says, "The crab does not beget a bird."

127.

Obi mfa afetrefetre enko Huam.

Nobody carries foreskins to Hua.

N.B.—Hua is a country lying east of the Volta River, and called Ayigbe or Aigbe, by the people themselves, who speak the Ewe dialect. The Huafo as well as the Andanme and the Enkranfo* or Ga tribes, practise keteafo, "cutting short," or circumcision, which may be derived from the Moslems, to judge from the age of the patients. It is performed by persons of a certain class, (not a priest) when the boys are twelve or fourteen years of age. The act does not seem to bear a religious character. Mr. Zimmerman denies the existence of circumcision, *utriusque sexus*, such as prevails throughout Islam—Egypt, for instance. On the other hand, the accurate Bosman ("Description of the Coast of Guinea," Letter 18,) expressly asserts that "some girls are here liable as well as the boys." The rite is held in great disdain by the Ashante and Oji people, who call it *Tyetia*. The above saying, "To carry foreskins to Hua," is equivalent to our "Carrying coals to Newcastle."

128.

Nea otya wo tyetia, enni wo adyom pa.

He who circumcises you will not (*exactly*) make good carpenter's work.

N.B.—Meaning, from skill in one branch of work, you cannot infer the same in another.

* Accra calls itself "Ga," and is known to the Oji people as Enkran. The word also signifies, in Oji, a kind of black ant popularly known as the "driver": thus it is an error to translate Accra—probably a corruption of Enkran—the land of White ants.

129.

Enkyienne nse nehu nse; miye de.

The salt will not say of itself, "I have a pleasant taste."

N.B.—Meaning, that self-praise is no recommendation.

130.

Aben enye de-a na; etua nip'ano.

Though a horn has a bad sound, yet it is applied to a man's mouth.

N.B.—Though one of your family be disagreeable, yet do not break with him.

131.

Magum na kum dom.

Reinforcement beats the foe.

N.B.—"L'union fait la force."

132.

Ehwyunne nya na eniwa nya.

When the nose gets (*a thing*), the eyes get (*it too*).

N.B.—When one of a family becomes rich, the others hope to share in his wealth.

133.

Ekwai 'agye wo, womfre no akwaiwa.

A forest that has sheltered you, you will not call a shrubbery.

N.B.—You will not detract from the merits of a benefactor.

134.

Ohienni bu be-a, ence.

When a poor man makes a proverb it does not spread.

N.B.—On the Gold Coast, and in pagan Africa generally, poverty, as in England, is not a misfortune, but a crime.

135.

Obi nsoma bi afiri fye, na anuma nkasa no.

When a person is sent to look at a snare, the bird does not upbraid him.

N.B.—Because the person does not come of his own accord: a slave is not culpable for what he does at his master's command.

136.

Aberriki se: nea abogya bum vo no, eho na adidi vo.

The goat says, "Where much blood is, feasting goes on."

N.B.—A feast is referred to for which eatables are collected: these attract to the spot goats, and the proverb is put into the hircine mouth because the animals are ever wandering about the town seeking fodder. The proverb corresponds with the Scriptural saying, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—Matth. xxiv. 28.

137.

Nnipa iniara de anka gwarre-a, von hu ye, cwam; na ahoho se oko da so, na ne hu bon.

Everybody who washes himself with lemon juice, becomes sweet-scented: therefore the Ahoho said he would go upon (*the lemon tree*) and live there, but still he stinks.

N.B.—These negroes wash themselves from head to foot at least once a day, and after washing rub their bodies with lime-juice to

remove the *bouquet d'Afrique*. The Ahoho is a red ant of peculiarly ill savour, generally found in lime and orange trees. The meaning is, "No remedy will affect innate and inveterate vices." Cf. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"—Jer. xiii. 23.

138.

Voni yanom-a, vomfre yanom.

If you have no comrades, you do not call for (*your*) comrades.

N.B.—Referring to enterprises which cannot be carried out save by the combined exertions of a number. Thus the meaning would be, "You must not count upon means that are not at your disposal,—cut your coat according to your cloth."

139.

Aboa no n' anom ye no de-a, onvi ne konmda.

Though the beast is dainty-mouthed, it does not eat its collar-bell.

N.B.—This alludes to dogs: though fond of dainties, they do not eat the ornaments fastened round their necks. The meaning seems to be, "Even greediness does not rush blindly upon everything nice and attractive."

140.

Obi ntutu anuma, enko kyerre panyin.

Nobody plucks a bird, which he is going to show to an old man (i.e., *in order to ask its name*).

N.B.—By plucking it he would defeat his own object, as the old man would no longer be able to identify the bird.

141.

Oponko agyimi-a, nea ote no so, ongyimie.

Because a horse is a fool, he who rides it is no fool.

N.B.—Meaning, that the defects or vices of a dependent are not to be attributed to his master.

142.

Vonam ba enu sum afiri-a, vonam ba enu na ko fye.

If you lay a snare in company, you go in company to look at it.

N.B.—If any one shares with you in a work, he should share with you in its reward.

143.

Biribi nko ka empopa, enye krada.

If nothing touches the palm-leaves they do not rustle.

N.B.—There is no smoke without fire.

144.

Eki se obekon-a, o ni n' akomfodi.

When Eki says he will not fight (*he means*) himself and his party.

N.B.—Eki is the name of a man, famous probably as a hardy warrior.

145.

Ohienni asomen ni batafose.

The poor man's ivory is a hog's-tooth.

N.B.—A hog's tooth is as valuable to a poor man as an elephant's tooth to a rich man.

146.

Ahine tew empanyin enim-a, enyera.

If a string of pearls breaks in the presence of grown-up people, nothing is lost.

N.B.—The string of pearls is worn by a child: nothing is lost, because those present will gather up the beads; but the child, if alone, would leave and lose them. The proverb means, "That if prudent people are at hand, they will take means to avert the evil consequences of a disaster."

147.

Aboa bi do srade-a, osua prako.

When an animal fattens, it learns from the pig.

N.B.—Meaning, that when one is the author and inventor of an art, those who practise it do so in imitation of him, not by their own invention.

148.

Okwan varre-a, vode von nanna tya, enye abonua.

When a way is long you shorten it with your feet, not with a hatchet.

N.B.—There is a pun on this proverb; "tya" meaning to cut off as well as to pass over or through. The meaning is, "Your means must be suited to your ends."

149.

Ano patiruw-a, esen namon.

When the mouth stumbles it is worse than the foot.

N.B.—A wrong word — "nescit vox missa reverti"—may be more harmful than a blunder in action.

150.

Mmofra nko tu-a, vanhu tu; empanyin enko tu-a, votiatia so.

When boys were to reap, they did not understand it; when old people were to reap, they trampled about (*the land*).

N.B.—The proverb is applied to the difficulty of settling a quarrel: some want the necessary prudence and experience, whilst others, from whom better things might be expected, side with one party and increase the evil instead of allaying it.

151.

Vose: ko man ko to,—na vonse nse; ko man ko sen.

They say, "Go into a town to settle;" and they do not say, "Go into a town to boast."

N.B.—This is addressed to those who leave their native land, and settle in another: they ought to join the people with whom they live, and not pride themselves upon retaining their own manners and customs, or attempt to set up new rules.

152.

Wokon enkran na nko-a, wontyorre abe ngum.

When you endeavour to drive the "drivers," and they will not give way, you do not peel palm-nuts and throw among them.

N.B.—Enkran, the "driver ant," has been alluded to in No. 127. It is a small black ant, which marches in line, bites severely, attacks houses, destroys all the smaller animals, and has, it is said, overpowered and killed hunters when, torpid with fatigue, they have fallen asleep in the bush. West Africans oppose their progress by fire, and palm-nuts attract them. Hence, the meaning of the proverb is, "When you are anxious to attain an object, you will not do anything that will have the opposite effect: you will not attempt to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it."

153.

Nea okem gye, ni me.

What hunger desires is repletion.

N.B.—The meaning is, that every want requires its particular satisfaction.

154.

Okwasia na ne gwan tew empen abien.

(*He is*) a fool whose sheep runs away twice.

N.B.—Because he was not warned by one mishap to secure his property. The meaning is, "He is a fool indeed who cannot learn even from experience."

155.

Osekanfua na gye nehu abofra ensem.

The blade of a knife resists in the hand of a boy.

N.B.—It resists or defends itself, *i.e.*, it will wound him that sports with it. The meaning is either "Let the inexperienced keep aloof from dangerous things, and not meddle with edged tools," or "Things useful in themselves may prove perilous to those who ignore their use."

156.

Wotan wo ni-a, womfa no mma dom

Though you dislike your relation, you will not deliver him to the army (*of the enemy*).

N.B.—Amongst West Africans the dislike to a relative rarely amounts to real hate, prompting hostility and a desire of destruction. This, perhaps, is one of the prerogatives of semi-civilised over a more highly cultivated society.

157.

Dua kontonkye na ma yehu dyomfo.

A crooked stick makes us know (i.e., *betrays*) the carpenter.

N.B.—It shows him to be a bad craftsman: by the quality of the work you judge the skill of the man.

158.

Obi se obefro dunsin-a, ma omforro na; oko so enim asan aba.

When a person says that he will climb up the tree-stump (*whose boughs have been cut off*), let him climb: he will go to the face (i.e., the *top*), and return.

N.B.—Another allusion to the *laissez aller* and *nonchalance* of the West African.

159.

Nea ota wo ommere-a, wo-a wogwan wonse; mabre.

If he who pursues you is not tired, you who are flying will not say, "I am tired."

N.B.—Danger will stimulate a man to the utmost exertion.

160.

Akokonini se: to tamfo enku-a, anka mabon anadyo, na vakummi.

The cock says, "Suppose enemies only (i. e., *if all were my enemies*), I should have crowed in the night, and should have been killed.

N.B.—The crowing of a cock in the middle of the night is considered by West Africans a bad omen, and the animal is forthwith killed. The meaning is, "A general hostile disposition towards a person who has no friends or protectors, will soon find a pretext for effecting his ruin."

161.

Ese ncia na, vofre no gyaw.

When the teeth do not meet (i.e., *touch*), it is called a gap.

N.B.—"Gyaw" is the gap which many people show between the two upper incisors. The meaning of the proverb is obscure.

162.

Okroboni ba ngwan kokotem kwn.

The son of a Krobo man does not run through the corn without cause.

N.B.—Krobo (Croboe) is a town built at the foot of a rocky mountain, with a steep and difficult ascent: it serves for a fortress in time of war, and has preserved the people from a foreign yoke. Hence, to see the son of a Krobo man flying through the corn-fields in the plain, would be an extraordinary event, announcing some great and unexpected distress.

163.

Okro voharre no afa enu.

A canoe is paddled on both sides.

N.B.—Measures taken to effect a purpose, in order to be efficacious must be complete.

164.

Aginamoa wu-a, enkura yem.

When the cat dies, the mice rejoice.

N.B.—The subjects rejoice at the tyrant's death; and, as we say, "When the cat is away, the mice play."

165.

Osucefa vommua.

A half-roof they do not put on (i.e., *you do not put a half-roof upon a house*).

N.B.—A work must not be left half done.

166.

Ti kro nko aginna.

One head does not go to a standing (i. e., *constitute a consultation*).

N.B.—"Aginna" properly means the act of going apart, or, more exactly, of standing apart from the general assembly. By implication, it denotes a committee, a consultation of several persons forming a particular party, who have retired from a greater assembly to converse apart. This would be wholly unnecessary where one person only is concerned. So the Italian, "Tre donne ed un, oca non fanno un mercato."

167.

Wo eni nkom-a na, wose: minnya daberre.

When you are not sleepy, you say, "I have no sleeping-place."

N.B.—When you *are* sleepy, you will be content with any place. The meaning is, "Necessity supersedes fastidiousness."

168.

Aduan bi-a vonni no, vonnoa.

Food, which you will not eat, you do not boil.

N.B.—You will not work without an object.

169.

Ohoho nsoa funnu ti.

A stranger does not carry the head of a corpse.

N.B.—The chief place will not be given to a stranger.

170.

Omamferenni nnyin kronkron.

A foreign settler does not grow pure (i.e., *never becomes a native*).

171.

Ohia 'ka wo, na woti abete-a, edan fan.

If, when afflicted with poverty, you eat Abete, it turns to herbs.

N.B.—"Abete" is a delicate food prepared from the flour of Indian corn. The meaning is, that poverty embitters every enjoyment.

172.

Obi ngyai esonno ekidi, enko di aserredua eki.

Nobody leaves off pursuing an elephant in order to pursue the aserredua (*a small bird*).

N.B.—You do not relinquish a great object for a trifling one.

173.

Wo ti ben wo, na wonya wo twyerre-a, vode bom hoara.

Though, when going to receive your blows (i.e., *the punishment you have incurred for some offence*), your head aches, yet they strike you in that very place.

N.B.—The meaning seems to be, "Justice is executed without regard to circumstances."

174.

Fa tom! Fa tom! na eye adesoa.

"Lay on! lay on!" makes a load.

N.B.—The repeated addition of small things will make at last a heavy load; many a little makes a mickle.

175.

Anini abien enna bon.

Two males (viz., *beasts of prey*) do not live in one den.

N.B.—A house or a family has but one master.

176.

Obi nso dai enko nea vobekum no.

Having dreamed, nobody will go where they will kill him.

N.B.—When a man dreams that he will be killed at a certain place, he will not go there: warnings must not be despised.

177.

Sikaadyuma biara nye aniwu.

Gold work (i.e., *any work for gold*) is no shame.

N.B.—Rather a shameful saying.

178.

Akuntuma kuntun n' afe, na onkuntun empanyin.

A bully fights with his peers, not with grandees.

179.

Anop' anom bon, na asempa na vom.

In the morning the mouth smells, but there are good words in it.

N.B.—Morning is held the best time for deliberating on matters of consequence.

180.

Anadyoboa nno aonwa.

Night venison (i. e., *game caught at night*) is not fat.

N.B.—Because at such time you cannot judge between the good and the bad. The proverb means, "Things got at random are rarely valuable." It is our buying a pig in a poke.

181.

Sika ye fe, na opegyafo ye na.

Gold is pretty, but the heir is rare.

N.B.—Where there are riches, an heir is often wanting: earthly happiness is never so complete but that it has some drawback.

182.

Wodi soa ensa, fye wo ensa.

When you eat a monkey's hand, look at your (*own*) hand.

N.B.—When you enjoy yourself at the expense of others, remember that you are liable to the same misfortune.

183.

Okwasia na ose: vode me yonku na vonne mi.

A fool says, "My friend is meant, not I."

N.B.—Because he refers a warning, meant for himself, to another man, and neglects to profit by it.

184.

Ohimmone ni bebi, na obofo bonne na vo bebi.

There is nowhere a wicked prince, but there are wicked ambassadors.

N.B.—When, in a transaction between two princes, anything goes wrong, it will be laid to the charge of the ambassadors, however much the fault is in the princes themselves. Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

185.

Nnipa pa bi ko sa, vanhu ano, na gyamakutroku ?!

Brave men who went to the war did not see the end (i.e., *could not bring it to a successful issue*), and a coward ? (*—what can be expected of him ?*).

186.

Oman tya wo sama, vompopa.

When the town ornaments your hair, they (*your relatives*) will not disorder (*or efface*) it.

N.B.—"Ornament" means, properly, cutting out figures on a person's head by the hair being removed unequally. "When the town," &c., *i.e.*, when it is done by a public decree to confer honour on you, your friends will take pride in it.

187.

Asom ni enkwanta.

The ear has not a double way (i. e., *two ways*).

N.B.—You can hear only one thing at a time. The saying is applied when a man is addressed by more than one person at once.

188.

Okwadu se: wammere na wodidi-a, enye di.

The antelope says, "When you eat without being tired, it has no relish."

N.B.—If a meal is to be really enjoyed, it must be preceded by exertion and fatigue—cibi condimentum fames est. The words are attributed to the antelope, because it is always running about.

[illegible]

[illegible] nyunne berrebu.

[illegible] weaves its nest.

[illegible] completed at once, but by repeated [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] no so ham ma.

[illegible] got the tortoise, you do not cut [illegible]

[illegible] thing till you have it in your power.

191.

[illegible] ko ye adyuma, wococoro so ko to [illegible]

[illegible] another man's hoe to work with, you [illegible] put it back in its place.

[illegible] borrowed must be carefully restored, and in good

192.

[illegible] vodea-a, woto wo yonkude.

[illegible] destroy yours, you join your friends.

[illegible] probably, that one who has squandered his own [illegible] himself to his friends, and subsist on their

193.

[illegible] tumm, enti em.

[illegible] looks at something black, and steps into it.

[illegible] when you see an impending calamity, which you may [illegible] not rush into it.

194.

Wo eni rebo-a wonse nse: miki te.

When your eye is going to ruin, you will not say, "I hate ophthalmia."

N.B.—You will not reprove in another person a defect with which you yourself are strongly affected. Our "fellow-feeling," &c.

195.

Onya nya nehu-a, onom nyankuensu.

When a slave becomes a free man, he will drink rain-water.

N.B.—From laziness; because other water must be fetched from a distance. I commend this truly African proverb—showing that the *emancipado* is incapable of moderation in the use of his liberty—to the consideration of all real philanthropists. It is easy to see that if a man will not labour even for his own wants, they do him a service who compel him to work.

196.

Obi amma m' amo-a, mirema mehu amo.

When a person neglects to congratulate me, I congratulate myself.

N.B.—Trifling neglects of respect must not be taken to heart, but passed over in good humour.

197.

Otam abirri-a, woncew yi.

Though your coat is dirty, you do not burn it.

N.B.—When a thing has a defect, you will not destroy, but mend it.

198.

Opitri memenne-a, omemenne ma oura.

When the Pitri absorbs (*the soup*), he does it for his master.

N.B.—The Pitri is a river fish, of which soup is made. In appearance, the quantity of the soup is reduced by being absorbed in the fish; but in reality it is only a transfer, the part that disappears being contained in the soup. The meaning is, "What you spend in improving your property, is not lost, though temporarily your means are diminished by it."

199.

Ohinne nye de-a, fye nea osafohinne rekyere.

When the prince does not please (*you*), see how the general appears.

N.B.—If you cannot agree with one person, go to another.

200.

Obi ntu mere ensie siw so.

Nobody gathering mushrooms replaces them on the ant-hill.

N.B.—Mushrooms most frequently grow on ant-hills, the red-clay structures of the termites, conical heaps 8 to 12 feet high: therefore the first person coming to the place would appropriate them, not thinking that they belonged to anybody.

201.

Obi akoa di Ahimma, vonhimma no kwa.

Though a slave's name be "Flog," yet you do not flog him without cause.

N.B.—Meaning, perhaps, that, however vicious a man be, he may not be punished except for some special act.

202.

Ankonam di atro.

Who travels alone tells lies.

N.B.—To establish the truth of a statement, two witnesses at least being required. The Persian proverb is, "Jehán dideh bisyár goyad durogh" ("Whoso seeth the world, telleth many a lie"). So our "travellers' tales."

203.

Obi bema wo aduan adi-a na, ode ampesi di wo adanse.

When anybody prepares food for you, he testifies to you by Ampesi (i.e., *he gives you some Ampesi to try it by*).

N.B.—By "Aduan" is meant the common food of the Gold Coast, called Fufu. Yams or plantains are cut to pieces, and boiled, in which prepared state they are termed "Ampesi." They are then pounded in a wooden mortar (*vodru*) till they become a tough, doughy mass (*fufu*). A round lump of this is put into the palm-nut soup (*enkwan*), popularly called "palm-oil-chop," and eaten with it. The meaning of the proverb is, that one who would benefit you, usually gives a foretaste of his kindness; or, more generally, that "coming events cast their shadows before."

204.

Mosia kokwaw entem-a, vode wo kon anwam.

If thou, pebble, hastenest to become smooth, they will fight the anwam with thee.

N.B.—"Anwam" is the name of a large bird that feeds on palm-nuts; and pebbles serve for buckshot when smooth and round. Many men have sufficient strength and talents to be useful, but for some defect or vice which prevents them from turning their powers to advantage.

205.

Obea tenten so' abe-a, onwam di.

When a tall woman carries palm-nuts, the birds will eat them.

N.B.—It is man's work to cultivate the fields, woman's to carry home the produce, which is balanced upon the head. The proverb accounts for why the latter sex is shorter than the former: it is necessary for the station and occupation allotted to it.

206.

Adesa okoko biri.

In the evening (*even*) a red man is black.

N.B.—As in Europeans there is a difference between a blonde and a brunette, so the West Africans distinguish amongst themselves black (*tuntum*) and red (*koko*) negroes, the skin of the former being of jetty hue, that of the latter a ruddy brown. The meaning of the proverb is, that circumstances level inequalities.

207.

Woferre-a, wofon.

When you pine (*under disgrace and contempt*) you fade.

N.B.—Mental uneasiness will break down a man's strength.

208.

Voseoma ba nimadefo, na vonsoma namontenten.

They send an intelligent man (*as messenger*); they do not send a long-step (i.e., *one who is able to walk fast*).

N.B.—As the West Africans ignore writing, a messenger is always the negotiator of the object for which he is sent; hence, in selecting him, mental qualifications are regarded rather than bodily strength.

209.

Apopokiki fi ensuase se odenkyem yarre-a, vongye n' akingye.

If an Apopokiki, from the bottom of the river, says that the crocodile is sick, it will not be doubted.

N.B.—The Apopokiki is a river fish, whose statement will not be discredited because he comes from the very place where the crocodile lives. The meaning is, that the testimony of an eye-witness will be credited.

210.

Wonnim asaw-a na, wose: akyinne nye de.

If you cannot dance, you will say, "The drum is not agreeable."

N.B.—You pretend to despise what you are not able to enjoy: "The grapes are sour."

211.

Aferr' enti na odomanin ti bo akyinne hu.

On account of shame (i. e., *being ashamed to flee*), the war-chief's skull sticks on the drum.

N.B.—The skulls of hostile chiefs and war captains, who are taken prisoners or are killed in battle, are fixed in trophies to the big drum. The proverb points out the dangers of ambition.

212.

Akoa nkyerre nnannua.

A slave does not show the timber.

N.B.—The "timber" here means the forest-trees fit to be used as timber. A slave will not point out where they are, because, when they are found, he will have the trouble of cutting them down, and

of carrying them home. The meaning of the proverb is, that a person will not prosecute an undertaking from which he expects more trouble than profit.

213.

Akoa mpaw ura.

A slave does not choose his master.

214.

'Obaakon enye barrima.

A man alone is no hero.

N.B.—One person alone will not effect great things: to accomplish an object, the united efforts of many are required.

215.

Abe berre-a, woso fa miso fa.

When the palm-nuts are ripe, you carry half, I carry half.

N.B.—Each of us must take an equal share of the trouble as well as the produce.

216.

Adi ama ni adi ama na agorro.

Mutual entertainment is (*fair*) play.

N.B.—More literally, "To eat and to give, to eat and to give, (*is*) a play."

217.

Onyansafo na tya akwamio.

An expert man cuts the roots in the road.

N.B.—"Akwamio" are the roots of trees running across the road, and cut away to render it more level. Some superstition attaches to this act, which must be performed according to certain rites, and by a man acquainted with them, otherwise evil would result. The meaning of the proverb is, "A business of importance must be performed by a man of skill and experience."

218.

Eniwn na tan onipa, na aso de entan onipa.

The eye envies—not the ear.

N.B.—The eye gives the occasion for envy and hate; even a good and affable man is often disliked, his kind words being disregarded, and jealous looks being cast upon his talents or his possessions.

219.

Yepe-na yebehu enti na yekekyirre boa.

To find (*a thing*) when we want it, we make a parcel.

N.B.—Showing the necessity of order and arrangement.

220.

Kontromfi se: voce m' afonnom-a na, meyi asem pa ma ka makyerow.

The baboon says, "If you put something into my mouth (i.e., *give me something to eat*), then I will produce a good word, and tell you."

N.B.—Probably meaning that good advice deserves a recompense; also, that no man does anything *gratis* for his neighbour.

221.

Dua bevo wo eni no vobu so, na vonsen ano.

When a piece of wood threatens to pierce your eye, they will blunt it, and not point it.

N.B.—You will endeavour to counteract, not to increase, an impending danger.

222.

Onantefo na odi ade, eye de.

What a foot-traveller eats, tastes well.

N.B.—Because he is hungry, and hunger is the best sauce.

223.

Ekru ntutu afa enu.

A wound does not pain at two halves (i. e., *on both sides of the body*).

N.B.—A calamity is felt only in the quarter visited by it.

224.

Wo sika ye wo yaw-a, na wokon-a, wonyi dom.

If your gold pains you, and you fight (i.e., *if in war you grudge your gold*), you will not conquer the enemy.

N.B.—Gold must be spent in gaining friends and confederates. If a great object is to be accomplished, you must put to work all your means and energies.

225.

Owu adarre nnow fa akon.

Death's sickle cuts not in one half only (*but universally*).

N.B.—The "Adarre" is a kind of bill-hook used by West Africans for cutting down the bush. We must Anglicize it by "sickle" or "scythe."

226.

Etua wo yonku hu-a, etua dua.

If another suffers pain, (*to you*) a piece of wood suffers.

N.B.—You are not affected by it: it is as if a piece of wood had the pain. This is a characteristic saying, showing the practical selfishness and feelinglessness of the wild West African, who, when tamed by slavery, becomes one of the most tender of men. Dr. Johnson's favourite dogma was, "Everybody is indifferent to another's pains and pleasures:" but his practice was diametrically opposed to his preaching.

227.

Anka berre ko, enye de.

A lemon that grows in ripening, is not agreeable (i.e., *does not taste well*).

N.B.—A thing must be mature before all its good qualities appear.

228.

Obi nsen fasu okotoku sen.

No one excels a wall in bearing bugs.

N.B.—In coarse work the most stupid may be the best.

229.

Vokura w' a, wo virr' afi enkekaw.

When they hold you (i.e., *when you are caught*), you forget to bite.

N.B.—At the critical moment the boaster hangs his head.

230.

Nea vo dom ensem na oyi ma.

What is in his hand, the enemy (*can*) give away.

N.B.—He cannot dispose of what is not in his power.

231.

Obi mfa enkodasem ensisi kontromfi.

Nobody will deceive a baboon by tricks.

N.B.—Because the beast is a master of tricks: you cannot defeat a man on his vantage-ground.

232.

Ese tenten enni ese akotia ediđi baakon.

Long teeth and short teeth eat the same food.

N.B.—Though there are different states and conditions amongst men, their ultimate lot is the same.

233.

Aberrewa, w' ano ye den-a, gye wo ban.

Old woman! if your mouth is (*so*) hard (i.e., *if your tongue is so sharp*), make your fence (*yourself*).

N.B.—"Ban" is the fence separating the house-yard from the street: it consists of palm-branches, and often requires repair. Old women, who cannot do that themselves, have it done by the kindness of others. The meaning of the proverb is, "Those who claim the assistance of others, should at least be civil to them."

234.

Woto pra, wato nam.

If you have found an armadillo, you have found meat.

N.B.—The meat being in the armadillo: so, if you sit by a well, you will not search for water.

235.

Ete vopirre no mmaakon mmaakon.

A head they defend it one by one.

N.B.—Or, less literally, "Each man defends his own head:" every person must take care of his own concerns.

236.

Abofra anhu' gwadi-a na, asia nyera.

If a boy does not understand bartering, he does not (*at least*) lose the gold-weights.

N.B.—When bartering, West Africans use cowries and gold-dust, and, for the latter, scales are carried by traders. "Asia" is one of the gold-weights. A boy (*or slave*) who understands the work, may be a source of gain to his master, but it may also happen that he loses some of the valuables which he carries with him. If he cannot be employed in trading, there is no chance of either gain or loss. The meaning of the proverb seems to be, that everything has its light and its dark side.

237.

Wo na waye akoko den, na dyonso abo no?

You, what have you done to the fowl, that it is affected with strangury?"

N.B.—Mr. Riis remarks, "The application of this odd proverb is difficult to guess." It is doubtless a wise saying, but somewhat too dark.

238.

Okekyefo ade enkura na di.

The mice eat the miser's goods.

239.

Anuma nifirifo vode emposai na yi no.

A sharp-sighted bird is caught by Emposai.

N.B.—"Emposai" is the withered bark of the plantain-tree, which is spread over to hide the snare. The meaning is, "By stratagem even a cunning man may be caught."

240.

Hua abete vodi n' abusuam.

Huaabete they eat at home.

N.B.—"Abete" is a delicate food of Indian corn: the best is made by the people of Hua (No. 127), who keep it for home consumption. Thus, the saying means, "You keep the choicest things for your own use and enjoyment."

241.

Aduanfyem enti na Obronni tu ko Abrokirri.

On account of food-looking-into (i.e., *intrusive curiosity*), white men went off to Europe.

N.B.—The West Africans naturally suppose that man was created in their country, and that at first whites and blacks all dwelt together. The former, however, were so much molested by the negroes, who were ever looking into their food and prying into their actions, that they emigrated from Africa to Europe. The proverb is a warning against over-curiosity, which may annoy others beyond endurance. Some of the converted negroes thus explain the difference of complexion:—Cain was a black man, but when rebuked by the Creator for murder, he turned pale with fear: hence the white colour. This is indeed "tit for tat."

242.

Obofo mmofra hu nye fe.

A miscreant's fellows are not pretty.

N.B.—Meaning, that people do not like to look upon them: they are unwelcome, and are dreaded wherever they appear.

243.

Wokusa ode bebrebe-a, eprim.

If you roast the yam too much, it will be burnt.

N.B.—Omne nimium nocet: ne quid nimis.

244.

Kokoseki mpe fi aba, anka onsisi sumana so.

If the vulture did not wish to come into the town, he would seat himself upon the Sumana-heap.

N.B.—"Sumana" is the huge heap of sweepings found at the end or outskirts of every negro town, and turkey-buzzards often perch upon it. The meaning seems to be, "If you constantly approach a thing, it is a sign that you have some design upon it."

245.

Obi mfa ade koko, ensisi baifo.

Nobody will deceive a witch by anything red.

N.B.—Because her craft will prevent her being deceived.

246.

Akoa nya nehu-a, ofre nehu Sonneni.

When a slave is emancipated, he will call himself a Sonneni (i.e., *a nobleman*).

N.B.—Amongst the numerous families with which the Oji-tribe is divided, the Sonna is the highest. When the freedman

calls himself Sonneni (i.e., *one of the Sonna*), the meaning is, that he is so much elated by his new condition, as to lose all power over himself, and to claim the most exalted rank. Our "beggar on horseback."

247.

Obi dece ko sum-a na, vofre no afanna.

When a (*free*) woman takes service, she is called a slave.

N.B.—Meaning that a person is estimated by what he is, not by what he was.

248.

Obi tan wo-a na, obo w' aboa.

When a person hates you, he will beat your animals.

N.B.—Hate extends to the relations and all belonging to the person hated. Conversely we say, "Love me, love my dog." Qui m'aime, aime mon chien.

249.

Ohantani na ki nipa.

A haughty person hates man.

250.

Ofatyafo, ebeka wo enku.

You, traitor! will be left to yourself.

N.B.—Knowing that you cannot be trusted, nobody will have anything to do with you.

251.

Wo emfefo som asra na wansom bi-a, ete se w' aivurow awu.

When your comrades take snuff, and you do not, it looks as if your nails were dead (i.e., *spoiled*).

N.B.—Meaning, you must follow the fashion: by opposing it, you excite suspicions injurious to your character.

252.

Odokonno bodam-a, onenam senm.

When the bread runs round, it dances it in the pot.

N.B.—"Dokonno" is bread of Indian corn, not baked, for that is forbidden by Fetish law, but boiled, according to the usage prevalent in Akwapim. The proverb probably means, "In a state of excitement the staidest person will behave wildly."

253.

Okwankyen mako se: wobebu mi-a, bu, na meyaw mi.

The roadside pepper-bush (i.e., *pepper-bush by the roadside*) says, "If you will break me, break; but do not abuse me."

N.B.—If you are resolved to ruin a man, do it at once, without tormenting him by reproaches: do not add insult to injury.

254.

Asem ba na, abebu ba.

When the occasion comes, the proverb comes.

N.B.—Occasion, *i.e.*, the incidents of life which call forth the proverb, and to which it refers.

255.

Ehia nipa, ma vomfa no nko.

When a man is in distress, let them take him.

N.B.—The distress referred to is capture by enemies, and the proverb means, "The distress of others is no concern of yours; do not trouble yourself about it." Truly philosophical!

256.

Vodi wo yonku hu asem-a, daaki vodi vode bi.

If sentence is (*now*) passed on your neighbour, another time it will be passed on you.

N.B.—Do not triumph at the distress of others; your time may also come.

257.

Anuma te afirim no, esonno ne kasa enku.

When a bird is in a snare, its cry is peculiar.

N.B.—A man's behaviour in distress will be different from what it is at other times. "Every season has its reason."

258.

Ade-a nye no na voye n' iye.

You mend (*only*) a thing that is not good.

N.B.—A thing in good order requires no repair.

259.

Wo ba sisi wo kora ba, enye; nanso wo kora ba sisi wo ba, enye.

If your child deceives the child of your sister-wife, it is

not right; and also if the child of your sister-wife deceives your child, it is not right.

N.B.—So the Hindi proverb, "A fellow-wife may be good, but her child is bad." When a man has several wives, they mutually call one another "me kora." The child calls all his father's wives (except his own mother) "little mother." *

260.

Wodi bi ade-a na, woferre no.

If you get presents from any one, you respect him.

261.

Abofra be musu ankron-a, ofa mu anum.

If a boy does nine mischiefs, he shall suffer for it five.

N.B.—And the father of the boy, who should keep his son under proper discipline, shall suffer the rest.

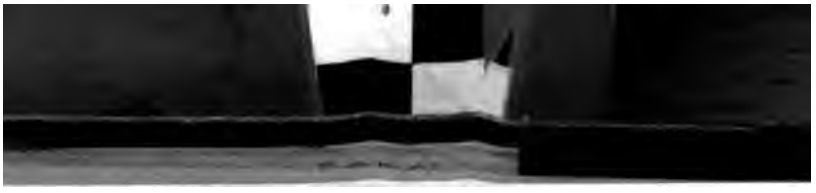
262.

Wotan wo sapo-a, w' anom bon.

If you hate (i.e., *if you shun it, so as not to use it*) your tooth-brush, your mouth is of ill odour.

N.B.—"Sapo" is a bunch of plantain-tree fibre, the "lif" of Egypt, which West Africans use as sponge and tooth-brush.

* In West Africa the mother is loved far more than the father; the negroes have many proverbs corresponding with the Hindi. "The milk of the sixth day is still sensible," and "A mother's love is best of all."



263.

Wo ni wu-a, wonwu, na oferre-a, wo enso waferre.

When your relation dies, you do not die; but if he is disgraced, you also are disgraced.

N.B.—Disgrace is worse than death: the latter befalls a single person only, whereas the former extends to his whole family.

264.

Teteasoe vonsoe ho bio.

On an obsolete resting-place they rest no more.

N.B.—"Asoe" is a place by the roadside, generally under a tree, where porters put down their loads, and rest awhile: "Teteasoe" is one that has been abandoned. The meaning is, "What is obsolete you will no longer use, but follow the 'mode' and do as others do."

265.

Wo tamfo asem ba, wodi ma no; na oda w' ase-a na, wongye so.

When your enemy is entangled in a quarrel (literally, *when your enemy's lawsuit comes*), assist him to settle it; but when he thanks you, do not reply.

N.B.—The meaning is, "Assist your enemy in his trouble, if you like, but maintain a proud and cold demeanour." An expression of thanks is courteously replied to by "ya abraw," to equal or inferior; "ya ura," to Europeans; "ya naado," to a wealthy and respected man of his own people; "ya ahinna," to a personage of the chief's family, and so on.

IV.

PROVERBS

IN

THE GA OR ACCRA LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE GA OR ACCRA LANGUAGE.

THE Ga or Accra Language is confined to the eastern portion of the Gold Coast, between the Volta River on the east and the Akwapim mountain-mass to the north and the north-west. The number of the Ga-speaking people might amount to 100,000; it is, therefore, one of the tongues which will die out with the advance of civilisation. At present it is divided into two dialects, the Ga Proper and the Adanme; the former being used by 40,000 to 50,000, the latter by 50,000 to 60,000 souls.

Of these two, the latter—being the more primitive and the less mixed with foreign elements—is held to be the mother tongue. The area extends from the vicinity of Christiansborg to Ada, or Adda, near the mouth of the Volta River, and in the north it is spoken by sundry of the towns of the Krobo Highlands.

The Ga Proper is used by the people of Jamestown (British Accra), Dutch Accra, Christiansborg, and sundry adjoining villages. On the east it is bounded by the Adanme; on the west by the Oji, Ochi, Otye, or Ashante tongue, with which it is intimately connected.

The language is rich in proverbs and legends: the missionaries have taught the people to commit to writing the

rude beginnings of annals. The stories are numerous and remarkable. There is even a particular name for a class. In Ananu, or spider, is the subject of many superstitions, injuring children that sleep in the same room with it.* It is represented as speaking through the nose, as the local demons are said to do; and its hobbling gait is correctly imitated by the relator with voice and gesture. Finally, it plays a principal part in fables, where the actors are mostly animals; and thus these tales are locally known as Ananseseu. For a specimen I must refer the reader to the work of the Rev. J. Zimmermann, from whose pages these proverbs are extracted.†

* On this part of the Gold Coast there is a large species of spider of bright yellow and black colours, spinning a silk-coloured thread, which may one day be utilised. Bosman (Letter 17) thus alludes to the animal:—"Going to my chamber at night, in order to go to bed, I found a hideous great spider against the walls; on account of the strangeness of the spectacle I called my sub-factor and both my assistants to see it. We found his body long and his head sharp, broader in the fore than hind part, but not round, as most sorts of spiders are. His legs were as large as a man's finger, ten in number, being hairy, and the thickness of a little finger. The negroes call this spider Ananse, and believe that the first men were made by that creature; and, notwithstanding some of them by conversation with the Europeans are better informed, there are yet a great number that remain of that opinion, out of which folly they are not to be reasoned. This is the greatest piece of ignorance and stupidity that I have observed the negroes guilty of."

The West Africans probably look upon the animal as the ancient Egyptians did the scarabæus.

† A Grammatical Sketch of the Akra, or Ga, Language, with some Specimens of it from the Mouth of the Natives, and a Vocabulary of the same, with an Appendix on the Adanme Dialect. By the Rev. J. Zimmermann. In two vols. Stuttgart, 1858. Printed for the Basel Missionary Society by J. F. Steinkop.

I have adopted the orthography of the reverend gentleman. Most of

1.

Alomte efon miau bo.

The cat does not cease to cry "miau."

2.

Ka foo lofio.

A crab does not beget a bird.

3.

Silafo etsoo filafo gbe.

A blind man does not show the way to a blind man.

4.

Kole nya nson.

The Kole (River) flows into the sea.

N.B.—This is quoted as we say, "Walls (or winds) have ears," warning people not to speak out their secrets.

5.

Nme kome fiteo nmei fe.

One (*bad*) nut spoils all.

the sayings explain themselves, or have been explained by the Oji proverbs: in some cases a short interpretation has been added. Nothing can be more distracting than the misprints of the work—too much, however, should not be expected from the printing-house of M. Steinkop, of Stuttgart—and nothing can be more Teutonic than its learned and copious disorder.

6.

Tsofatse enuu tsofa ehaa helatse.
A physician does not drink medicine for the sick.

7.

Tutsofa ke la yee.
Gunpowder and fire do not agree.

8.

Sikpon ko enyee gbonyo.
No land hates a dead body.

9.

Blomo dsee nma ni ayeo.
Quarrel is not a food which is eaten.

10.

Wiemo kpakpa dseo mlifu.
A good word removes anger.

N.B.—The natives of the Gold Coast have borrowed many of their sayings and not a few of their ideas from Europeans, with whom they have had intercourse for centuries. Compare with Proverbs xv. 1.

11.

Ke dse na le, gbomei fe dio.
If it is dark, all men are black.

N.B.—So the French say, "Tous les chats sont gris"—at night.

12.

Ke okpongo edsim le, moni ta eno le hu edsimko.

If the horse is mad, he who sits upon it is not also mad.

13.

Nu ni ake-bagbe la le, ataoole kronkron.

Clear water is not wanted for quenching fire.

14.

Ke Okplom ye nii le, Ohwam hu yeo eko.

If the Okplom eat something the Ohwam also eats something.

N.B.—The Okplom and the Ohwam are both animals. The meaning of the saying is, "Suum cuique," "live and let live:" no one should take all to himself.

15.

Ake hinmeii enyo kwee to mli.

Not with both eyes people look into a bottle.

16.

Ke lilei kome ke lileii akpe kpe le etoo biti.

If one tongue meets with a thousand tongues it faints.

17.

Ke onaa lo le, oyeo komi.

If thou find no fish, thou eatest bread.

18.

Humi egbee flo gbemo.

A quiet man makes not the noise of an elephant.

19.

Dare kome guonii yee kpainkpawo wo.

One dollar's (*worth of*) wares does not allow a man to eat a fowl worth sixpence.

N.B.—Cut your coat according to your cloth.

20.

Adudon ni kpa gbonyo hewo le, ekele ate.

A fly which hovers round a dead body will go with it.

21.

Ko ni ake-tfa dfeian kolo le, ake tfaa sia no.

The stick with which people strike a beast in the grass (i.e., *a beast of the field*), they do not strike a house-thing (i.e., *domestic animal*) with.

22.

Nu hie ye feo si ehii mli wo.

The face of water is beautiful, but it is not good to sleep on it.

23.

Ke ona le, no obio mliwo.

If thou get, thou askest to put more to it.

24.

Ke ofo olilei osa okpe le, onan kolo ko osa okpe.

If thou cut off thy tongue and roast and gnaw (it), thou wilt not get an animal to roast and gnaw.

N.B.—See Oji Proverbs, No. 122.

25.

Noni ake-feo Taki, le ano-fee Ba.

What a Taki is made with, with that they make no Ba.

N.B.—Taki and Ba are figures on playing cards.

26.

Kokonte taoo hulu.

Dried cassava wants sun.

N.B.—Otherwise it spoils.

27.

Akpokplonto taoo ela elee le, no dsi noni esuo ekue ewoo enono mli le.

The terrapin wants not to know its blood, wherefore it contracts its neck (*and*) puts (*it*) into its shell.

28.

Moni taoomi nakai le, emi ese ehe.

Whoever wants me as I am, is content.

29.

Mei fia yakwoo tso: akpokplonto tekwo le, amane eba.

Everybody goes and climbs a tree: the terrapin went and climbed; trouble has come.

30.

Mo enyee mo yaka.

Nobody hates anybody without cause.

31.

Bo le, oke, ona nanyo kpakpa, si olee noni ekeo ye ose.

As for thee, thou sayest that thou hast a good friend; but thou knowest not what he saith behind thy back.

32.

Gbomo etaa lo yaka

A man is not lean without cause.

33.

Ke Enadsi nyie le, Ntiblii ye mli

If the Enadsi wander, the Ntiblii are among them.

N.B.—The Enadsi are yellow "palm birds," and the Ntiblii are their companions, the red orioles.

34.

Kedsi tso futu tei amli le, efo midsra.

If wood mix with stones, its cutting is difficult.

35.

Moko fee Hatso sisi, si Nokotso sisi afeo.

No one plays under the Hatso, but under the Noko people play.

N.B.—The Hatso, or torch-tree, is full of thorns; the Noko bears sweet berries.

36.

Kedshomo, miye gbo le eke-dse eman.
If hunger eats a stranger, he brought it from his town.

37.

Ohiafo ebuu man.
A poor man does not watch over the town.

38.

Nudso ekwoo gon.
The brook does not ascend the mountain.

39.

Gbomo tsio koyo.
A man moves the wind.

40.

Mokome efee man.
One makes not a people (or town).

41.

Ohiafo ble egbee.
The poor man's pipe does not sound.

42.

Adeda kuku ekuu see enyo.
A curtailed bill-hook does not break twice.

43.

To gbonyo see kakla.

A dead goat does not fear the knife.

44.

Bai enyo ehii bu kome mli.

Two crocodiles do not live in one hole.

45.

Beni Oda ka akpakai mli, bele Tsunye mibo "Awo!"

When the Oda lies in the basket (*for carrying men*), then the Tsunye (*or house-mother*) cries "Awo."

N.B.—The Oda is a large lizard living on walls; the Tsunye (*literally, house-mother*) is a smaller species inhabiting rooms. None but Europeans, mulattos, kings, and nobles are permitted to be carried in the local hammock, or basket, upon men's heads. Awo! (*i.e.*, "exalted!") is the cheer used by bystanders to the rider.

46.

Ke sasabonsam te ya no le, aye we etoo.

If the devil comes to customs (the local worship), he lodges in the witch's house.

N.B.—"Sasabonsam" has been explained before.

47.

Mantsebii edsoo foi kwee yitso.

A prince does not run to look at the (*cut off*) head.

N.B.—Because every head cut off in execution must be shown to the king.

48.

Alomte ke "mlikpamo no:" hewo ni ehee nyon.

The cat says "stretching (i.e., *repose*) is sweet," wherefore it does not buy a slave.

N.B.—Because slaves make the master's hours bitter.

49.

Moko ke kploto haa klan sito.

No one gives a pig to a hyena to keep.

50.

Afi ke: moni gbemi edoomi, ake moni fa mitsere.

The partridge says, "He who kills me does not grieve me, as he who plucks my feathers."

51.

Moko ke enadsi enyo susuu fa.

Nobody measures the river with both his feet.

52.

Kedsi sisa mita ode le, onine osuo.

If a ghost shake thy hand, thine arm shrinks.

53.

Batafobi bi enye ake: "Awo, meni yo ohie kpoikpoi le?" Ekele ake: "Wo se le ona momo!"

The young wild hog asked his mother, "Mamma, what are the warts in thy face?" She replied, "By-and-by thou wilt have seen it already."

54.

Ke Didei dse fa mli ni eke ake; ba he miye le, bele ehe miye lelen.

If the Didei leaves the river and says that the crocodile is sick, then it is truly sick.

N.B.—The Didei is a sweet-water fish.

55.

Alanmali fee kpoi amli.

The Alanmali does not play in rocky places.

N.B.—The Alanmali is a small lobster (*prawn?*) which prefers the sea-sand.

56.

Ofoi yitson etaa la.

The horse-fly's head does not lack blood.

57.

Kedsi obe floto le, oyaa Wei.

If thou hast no bag thou does not go to Wei.

N.B.—Wei is a place where grain is bought.

58.

La ye lilei sisi, ni atseo ladso.

Blood is under the tongue, and people spit saliva (i.e. *not blood*).

59.

Moko lee moni fo Okaikoi.

Nobody knows who bare Okaikoi.

N.B.—Okaikoi is the proper name of a person whose parents were unknown.

60.

Moko enoo Sadso emaa abono.

Nobody takes the Sadso and builds a barn with it.

N.B.—The Sadso is the monkey-bread, calabash-tree, or Adansonia digitata, whose timber is too soft for building purposes; moreover, in many parts of the Coast there is a superstition that it attracts lightning.

61.

Oda le, ake musunko ko ye, nohewo le ebu si eto.

The Oda (*lizard*) knows that there is a belly-ache, therefore it lies on its belly (i.e., *prepares*) for it.

62.

Ani ke ake "Tui!" le to egbo?

If people say, "Tui!" is the sheep dead?

N.B.—"Tui!" means "flee!" and is used when driving away smaller animals.

63.

Bonso da kpetenkple mon; si nsonkotoko gbeolè.

The whale is truly very big, but the sea-porcupine (*the sword-fish ?*) kills him.

64.

Re lilei ke, eke ahu le, eke dsen yee he gbo.

If the tongue say it be very very long, it cannot vie with the boa constrictor.

65.

Meko enmee tso he, ni eyaye koyo abo.

Nobody lets go a tree and swings in the air.

66.

Anyiee flo se, ni adu tsone.

Nobody follows an elephant and falls into a trap (*which his cunning would avoid*).

67.

Kedsi noko bi oden le, kamia ni gbekebii mititi onine se.

If nothing is in the palm of thy hand, close it not lest children pinch its back.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a rogue who gives more than he has. "Ein schelm ist, der mehr gibt, als er hat." See also the Oji Proverbs, No. 22.

68.

Man kuku ake sa Tsile.

With a piece of herring they catch the Tsile.

N.B.—The Tsile is a large fish caught in numbers off the Gold Coast during the months of August and September. In the Oji dialect the word is "Sire," which resembles in sound the "Shir" (*fish*) East Africa.

69.

Nine se ke koko ten yee he gbo.

The back of the hand and the palm do not unite.

70.

Toii enyo si enuu sadsi enyo.

Two ears, but they do not hear two stories.

71.

Moko etsoo gbeke Nyonmo.

Nobody shows heaven to a child (*because the child itself sees it*).

N.B.—Nyonmo is translated by the missionaries "God," whose face or outside Heaven is considered to be; hence Nyonmo ke Sikpon, Heaven and Earth, are both deities, and personal entities. Synonymous with Nyonmo are Nanyonmo, Mawu, and Nyonmo Mawu, also Tse or Ata Nyonmo, *i.e.*, Father God, and even Wotse, Our Father, and Wofe Wotse, Father of all (*Allvater*). As with the classical Jupiter, atmospheric phenomena are connected with Nyonmo, thus they say, Nyonmo rains, lightens, drizzles, knocks, *i.e.*, thunders. Cf. Oji Proverbs, No. 52.

72.

Gbo hinmeii kpleikplei, si enaa man mlinii.

The eyes of a stranger (*may be*) very large, but he does not see the inner things of the town (*or nation*).

73.

Tu fee ye Abrotsiri, ni ebamomo ye Ga.

A gun does not burst in Europe and wound (*people*) in Ga.

N.B.—Abrotsiri or Ablotsiri is land of white people: Europe, America, and even Sierra Leone,—all indifferently called "Oibo" in Yoruba.

74.

Anmoo kuntu kpo.

A blanket (*lit. woollen stuff*) is not made into a knot.

75.

Afi efee nmotse.

The partridge is not greater than the planter.

N.B.—It may also be understood the partridge makes not (*or is not*) the planter.

76.

Yitso taa si, ni nakutso bu fai.

The head does not sit down and the knee put on a hat.

N.B.—In West Africa people sit upon their knees, not as in England.

77.

Tonye akweo aheo tobi.

The mother of the goat is looked at (*if*) the kid is bought.

78.

Dun foo Yo.

The Dun does not beget the Yo.

N.B.—The Dun is a dark-grey antelope about the size of a goat; the Yo is smaller and prettier.

79.

Blo momo hi fe blo he.

An old broom is better than a new one.

N.B.—Because sharper. We say the contrary—new brooms sweep clean. "Neue Besen kehren gut." And the Hindi proverb, "A new servant will catch a deer."

80.

Sio yee Tamii.

An elephant does not eat small berries.

N.B.—The Tamii is a sweet berry, not unlike that of ripe coffee.

81.

Dsu baa Dsu kome.

Monday does not come one Monday only.*

82.

Ghomo taa si ni ano tso aye odase.

A person does not sit (*or exist*) whilst they take a tree to witness.

83.

Fa tsio fa yi se.

A river moves a river on.

* The Ga week has seven days, three pairs and one single. Thus, Monday (the first day) and Tuesday are Dsu and Dsufo, Wednesday is Sho, Thursday and Friday are So and Soha, Saturday and Sunday are Ho and Hogba. Neither can the signification of the words nor can the reason of the peculiar arrangement be discovered. Hogba, or Sunday, is kept as a day of rest by many of the heathen, who hold it to be the seventh or last of the week—doubtless a neo-Christian idea.

84.

Ke oke tso wo bu mli ni onaa noni yo mli le, ke oke onine wo mli le, ona noni dsi.

If thou put a stick into a hole and dost not see what is in, if thou put thy hand in thou knowest what it is.

85.

Ke atere ni onaa le, ke akpo na si le, ona.

If something is carried on the head and thou seest it not, if it be put down thou seest it.

86.

Ho lei ano flo ho.

With the Ho's long tail the Ho is bound.

N.B.—The Ho is a very small monkey with large head and long tail.

87.

Nine lakaa mo.

The hand does not deceive one.

88.

Abui ni he do la le, esaa kpa.

A hot needle burns the thread.

89.

Gbomo fon hi fe sia flo.

A bad person is better than an empty house.

N.B.—Shows the extraordinary sociability of negroes, who have a positive dread of solitude.

90.

Woni ke "Eno" le, ayee asiile.

People eat not without him that saith "it is good."

N.B.—Literally, "him who says it is sweet, people when eating do not leave"—meaning, that it would be shameful (according to native ideas) if he were not asked to sit down.

91.

Ke olee onanyo se le, okaa to ohaale.

If thou knowest not what is behind thy neighbour's back, thou dost not venture (*to buy*) a sheep for him.

92.

Mantsesei dsee lai kakadan ni mei enyo ta no.

A thorn is not a long piece of wood that two persons may sit upon it.

93.

Moko hamotsomo dsee mo simo.

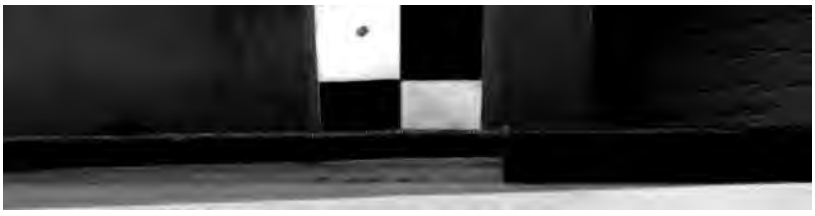
To precede a man is not to leave him.

94.

Suie be ni ayeo Lolowa.

There is no cabbage, therefore (*lit. then*) people eat herbs.

N.B.—The Lolowa is a herb eaten only when vegetables are scarce.



95.

Ke osi nme le, eko ya omama mli.

If thou pound palm nuts, some will stain thy cloth.

96.

Tso ni te la mli le, ena nala.

A stick that goes into fire will begin to burn (*lit. its end burns*).

97.

Lo ni no le amane ye he.

About a sweet fish there is danger.

98.

Moko enoo sigbemohe efee wohe.

Nobody makes a falling place (i.e., *a place where people fall*) his sleeping-place.

99.

Nabu lee, ake etse mife fei.

The mouth does not know that its master is afraid.

100.

Moko ke mama he taa mama momo ten.

No man puts (*a piece of*) new cloth into an old garment.

N.B.—Cf. Matt. ix. 16, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment," &c. From this it is probably borrowed.

101.

Awoo ni alaa.

No sleep, no dream.

102.

Soro kwe, soro kwe bie.

It is one thing to look, it is another to look here.

103.

Nine abeku ahiisi ni gbonyo sio mo.

The left hand remains not (*quiet*), when a dead body strikes at one.

N.B.—When a man dies under suspicion of poison, they carry about his corpse, which strikes at his murderer.

104.

Moni homo ye le ni egbo le, abii edeka si.

Whom hunger ate and he died, people enquire not after his box.

105.

Odomirifa ye noko ni eyeo dsikule etsan ka.

Had Odomirifa aught to eat, he would not dig for crabs.

N.B.—Odomirifa is a proper name.

106.

Moko enaa tso ni eke ehinmeii tsre na.

Nobody sees a stick and rubs his eyes at it.

107.

Mo hie-wiemo ke tsomo le, edsee mo dsemo.

To warn a man is not to scold him.

108.

Se nuu wiemo.

The back does not bear a word.

109.

Ke odsu mantse he le, oke eko dsuo ohe.

If thou wash a king, thou washest thyself with some (*of his soap, &c.*).

110.

Moko ke Asamanukpa daa tetfa.

Nobody vies with the Asamanukpa in stone-throwing.

N.B.—Asamanukpa means head-ghost, or spectre-elder; it is described as a chimpanzee, or a baboon, living on the islands of the Volta River, where the Sisai, or shades of the departed, have their Gbohiadse, Hades, or dead-world.

111.

Nye be tsofa.

Hate has no medicine.

112.

Heni gwanten sumoo le, dsei enoo eyen etaa.

Where the sheep likes, there it places its white (*spot*).

113.

Moko naa tamo Opale na.

Nobody sees as Opale sees.

114.

Hienmalo be ni afeo ebii ahe.

The Hienmalo is absent, so they play with his cubs.

N.B.—Hienmalo, "forehead-scratcher," and Kotse, "lord of the bush," are epithets of the Olowo, or leopard.

115.

Moko enmoo kpo ni esi egonti.

No one makes a knot and leaves his thumb (i.e., *without his thumb*).

116.

Na tamo oblan.

A wife is like a giant.

117.

Moni nmo kpo le, le ele fenemo.

He who makes a knot, knows to loose it.

118.

Soro moko yitson, soro moko yitson.

Different one man's head, different the others.

N.B.—Meaning, that everybody has his own head, his peculiarities.

119.

Ga se gbe dsi gbe.

The way after (*the people*) Ga, that is the way.

N.B.—The Rev. Mr. Zimmermann here remarks, that "the Ga people consider themselves a leading people." I should be thankful, as an amateur anthropologist, or comparative-anthropologist, vulgarly called ethnologist, to know the name of the race that does not.

120.

Miwo tsu mihao, si ote mikpai.

I thatch for you a house, you hide my strings.

N.B.—The houses are thatched with grass or palm-leaves, which are bound on with strings.

121.

Gbeke edfaa akpokplonto, si gbeke le wao dfa.

A child does not break a land tortoise, but a child knows how to break a snail.

N.B.—The Hindi proverb is, "Boys' play is death to the birds."

122.

Beni omia onanyo ko le onanyo hu mi miao.

When thou pressest a friend of thine, thy friend also presseth thee.

123.

Ohwam, kedsi ote ni bai le eha ten le hewo le, dɛmo; si wose le, ke nme le tsu le, owaye eko.

Ohwam, if thou go (*and see*) that the leaves have covered the palm-tree, remove them, for by-and-bye, when the nuts are ripe, thou will eat some.

N.B.—The Ohwam is an animal that lives on palm-nuts.

124.

Noni bako da le, eye nso se.

What has not come before, is behind, the sea.

N.B.—Meaning, that you can say so, as people have not seen it.

125.

Moko enaa moko oblan, ni ehuru eyi si.

Nobody sees the giant slave of another and jumps for joy.

126.

Kele mli ye nii kule, onufu ye noko ni eyeo.

If in length there were aught, the serpent would have something to eat.

N.B.—On the contrary, the Somal of East Africa say, "Length is honourable even in wood."

127.

Abe mama ni abio yo si.

He has no cloth and calls for a woman.

N.B.—The Mama is the native garment, a square of calico, worn as a toga by day and used as a sheet at night. The want of it shows extreme poverty.

128.

Suilafo fee mlu mli.

A blind man does not play in the dust.

129.

Tim tim dsu amada teomo, si ehe saomo mli yo.

To brag is not to plant bananas: in clearing the ground about them, it (*the work*) consists.

130.

Ahio man ni oheo ben.

Do people dwell in a town where there is no warm (*food*)?

131.

Moko ehoo nii eyamaa nmanmasa, akẹ ectao ewekumei abaye.

Nobody cooks food and puts it on the dust-hill, to seek his relatives that they may eat.

132.

Ke otso kolo tsokpemo le, ke ewo hu ema ena.

If thou teach a brute stick-chewing, even if it sleeps, it sticks in its mouth.

N.B.—Tsokpemo, or stick-chewing, alludes to the use of the which in these regions answers to our tooth-brush.

133.

Kokote wonu ekpa efie si: si masro sika Dsosru?

The Kokote soup is poured out—should I regard the sovereign?

N.B.—The Kokote is a sea-fish of delicate flavour, and the Dsosru is a measure of gold-dust worth about £1.

134.

Okukuba ke elei ke le, sone efa.

(*No sooner*) the Okukuba said his tail was long, than the weasel boasted.

N.B.—The Okukuba is a small field animal with a long tail.

135.

Tso ni aklonto be he le, ekwo dsra.

A tree which has no fork, its ascent is difficult.

136.

Dsẹ ana ni ase wohe.

It will get dark and a sleeping-place will be found.

137.

Babi gboo fa.

A young crocodile does not die in the river.

N.B.—The river being its proper place.

138.

Ke oke wo nkpla able le, ehie sooo.

If thou huskest corn with the fowl, it will not esteem thee.

139.

Atfaa mo te, ni awo sukukuli atso ehie.

Nobody (*intending to*) cast a stone at one, takes up a clod and shows it to him.

140.

Moni eto ke moni himo yeole le: namo aho aha.

One is full, the other is hungry.—to whom do people sell?

141.

Moni tsuo nii hao le, eyaa ke emusu flo.

He who works for thee, does not go with an empty belly.

142.

Blofo-okpo ke: Moni yeo nii ehaao le, le ogbeo la ohaa.

The European pigeon says, "He who eats and gives (*food*) to thee, for him thou quenchest the fire."

N.B.—Blofo, in the Ga language, meaning anything European, from the radical "Blo," corn or maize, because, when the first strangers came to the coast, the women were grinding, and said, "These men are white as corn."

143.

Moko enoo adeda etoo lema he.

No one takes a bill-hook and cuts an axe with it.

144.

Wonu no kolo le na, si nine enaa eke-fa.

Soup is sweet to an animal, but the animal has no hand to take it up with.

145.

Ke dsulo ke ele dsu eyadsu okplem.

If a thief say he knows how to steal, let him steal a cannon.

146.

Moko ke enumo etoo nyonma he.

No one puts (*down*) five for ten.

147.

Ke odi adudon se le owuleo ofia mli.

If thou care (*to kill*) the fly, thou wilt hurt thy boil.

148.

Ohi lo, si oye mlebo.

Thou hatest meat, and—thou eatest liver!

149.

Ke akpokplonto hewo kule atfaa tu.

If it were for the land-tortoise's sake, no gun would be fired.

150.

Fieholo ko ehoko ba da.

A cabbage-dealer has never sold (*mere*) leaves.

N.B.—If you believe him. Our "No one cries bad fish."

151.

Kasolo yeo nii kaku mli.

The potter eats out of a potsherd.

152.

Ke oye lele mli le, odsieo mli nu.

If thou art in a vessel thou takest out the water.

153.

Oben ni ayaa hewo le oke, nso le nme.

Thou art not on (*it*) when people go (*upon it*), therefore thou saidst "the sea is calm."

154.

Ke flo ke: eta lo le, dsee tsokpo kome ne enan.

If the elephant say he is thin, he has not only one tray full.

N.B.—But much more.

155.

Gbo edsaa konolo.

A stranger does not divide Ko-meat.

N.B.—Ko is a festive food.

156.

Ga weku tamo mampam fo, ke okpa le, bele ohe gbla.

A Ga family is like crocodile's fat, if thou anoint thyself (*with it*) thy skin cracks.

N.B.—Warning the world not to meddle with so great a people as the Ga.

157.

Tsebi ke, Dse na: si nyebi ke, Dse nako.

A father-child says it is night, but a mother-child says it is not night.

N.B.—Tsebi is a half-brother by the same father but another mother, often contrasted with Nyebi or Nyemi, a half-brother by the same mother, which is held to be a nearer relationship than the former. Mr. Zimmermann believes that the proverb relates to family quarrels springing from polygamy.

158.

Momosa le Kwaw Mensa; mitao Fete aya, si mibasro ni atsule Gua.

Kwaw Mensa once wished to go to Fete; it was different when he was sent to Gua.

N.B.—Kwaw Mensa is the name of a man; Fete is distant from Accra ten miles, Gua, or Cape Coast Castle, sixty.

159.

Ke otao nme le, ya Tutu.

If thou wish for palm-nuts, go to Tutu.

N.B.—Tutu is a town in Akwapim, where palms abound.

160.

Moko enoo nine abeku etsoo emangbe.

No one shows the way to his town with the left hand.

161.

Tsina wolo see tsina.

A cow-herd does not fear a cow.

162.

Gbe ko gbe edsee.

A dog does not bite a dog till (*blood*) comes out.

163.

Wo ni edsoo le, akokobesa eke-yaa.

A fowl that is not good, with spices it goes (i.e., *is eaten*).

164.

Gbobilo lee kolo helatse hewo ni etfale tu.

A hunter knows not sick game, therefore he shoots it.

165.

Loflo ni edsen tsere le, mra ekaseo flikimo.

A bird which does not get feathers, quickly it learns to fly.

N.B.—Said of the precocious.

166.

Fioflo adudon ye gbe toi.

Little by little a fly eats a dog's ear.

167.

Ke lo ko ke, ewo fo ahu le, eke kploto yee he gbo.

If an animal say it be very fat, it does not rival the pig.

168.

Sisi ke nwei yee gbo.

Earth and heaven do not come together.

169.

Oia gbii fa fe to gbii.

The days of poverty are more than the days of superfluity.

170.

Osumo nyontsomei nyonma ke kpawo.

Thou wilt serve seventeen masters.

N.B.—Cf. Matt. vi. 24 : " No man can serve two masters," &c.

171.

Gbi ni amo kploto le, batafo atso hamo.

The day when the pig will be caught, the wild boar will lead the way.

172.

Ke akpokplonto ke; wa hewo, dsikule awoo tako ye sikpon ne no.

If the land-tortoise would say (*it is*), for hardness' sake people would take up pads upon this earth.

N.B.—Meaning, if it depended upon the saying of the land-tortoise, that it is too hard, &c., because of its hard shell.

173.

Asantemei wonu no, si no fo mli tso.

The soup of the Ashante is tasteful, but there is too much salt in it.

N.B.—The people whom we call Ashan'tee, and sometimes Ashantee', are known upon the Gold Coast as Ashante, or Ashinte. The proverb alludes to their cruelties. The Hindus say, "The rule of Harbhúm," a place (Ilahabad) celebrated for injustice.

174.

Ehe wa tamo ba.

He is as hard as a crocodile.

175.

Homo yele take klan.

He is as hungry as a hyæna.

176.

Moko yee yele na ye su mli.

Nobody buys yams in the ground.

N.B.—Somewhat like No. 179.

177.

Gbeke ma koi ni onukpa hio sisi.

A child builds a second story and an old man dwells down-stairs.

N.B.—Relates to the changes and chances of life.

178.

Tantra dsimi, dsa no mifo ye.

I am a Tantra (*-fish*): in the market I bear (*children*).

N.B.—Fo means also to beget. So a common wedding salutation is, "Okele afo bii nyonma ke enyo!"—Mayst thou beget (or bear) twelve children with her (or him).

179.

Ahoo alomte ye floto mli, si adsieole fan.

A cat is not sold in a bag, but openly produced.

180.

Aaye Koko enmore dsikule aaye yekose.

If people would eat Koko raw, they would eat it so behind the bush (i.e., *in the country, not in the town*).

N.B.—Koko is the smaller yam, which is eaten roasted or boiled. In Oji the proverb is, "Vobedi Koko amonno-a, anka vodi n'afu so;" and the meaning is the same.

181.

Wa ke, ehewo dsikule tu egbee ye kon.

The snail says, for his sake no gun would go into the bush.

182.

Ananu taa si, ni abe gugo akase le.

A spider does not sit, that people may teach it to speak through the nose.

N.B.—Because it can or is supposed to be able to do that already.

183.

Ke niyenii ye sia le, akee ake ayadsu bayele ke-ba sia.

If food be in the house, people do not say, "Yams shall be stolen and brought."

184.

Klan kplaa tsina.

A hyæna does not drive a cow.

185.

Ke gbe ke edseke ahu le ehoo man he.

If a wag says it is very long, it does not pass the town (i.e., *it leads to it*).

186.

Dede mife kolo si eke Kokon.

Dede is a fool, but she says it is Kokon.

N.B.—Dede or Kokon are women's names.

187.

Kakraka feo gbele nii si egboo.

The cockroach seems to die (lit. *makes things of death*), but does not die.

N.B.—The "roach" is very troublesome in the Gold Coast houses. Mr. Zimmermann translates Kakraka or Kaklaka "chafer."

188.

Wo nane egbee ebi.

The foot of a fowl does not kill its chicken.

189.

Onukpa boo madsi ano toi.

An elder hearkens not to the thing (i.e., *the gossip*) of towns.

190.

Ke okakla foo le, obon oke-woo.

If thy knife cut thee thou sheathest it.

N.B.—Meaning, thou dost not cast it away.

191.

Ohenyelo ke: otaoo egbo.

Thine enemy saith, "Thou wishest my death."

192.

Lebi dan dseo fu mon, si wiemo kpakpa dseon.

In the morning the mouth hath an evil savour, but a good word comes out of it.

193.

Niiatse foo dsoi fe, si efoko yafodso da.

A rich man composes every dance, but he has never composed a dance of weeping.

194.

Ke owye yo adfaman le, onaa mlifu.

If thou marry a harlot, thou dost not wax wroth (*at what may happen*).

195.

Sane fon ni yo dsen hewo ni ke afo bi ni awieo atsoole.

For the evil that exists in the world it is, that thy child when born is instructed.

196.

Ke owo mama ni esaao le, ni atseoo oblafo.

If thou wear a cloth that fits thee not (*it happens*) that thou art called an executioner.

N.B.—The criminal's clothes being the African Calcraft's perquisites.

197.

Nyomotse naa mlifu.

A debtor does not get angry.

198.

Nyon edsee gbi kome ni efo kpen.

The moon does not appear one day (*only*) and cease to shine.

199.

Ke ohe waa oke: Tako ehii.

If thou art weak, thou sayest the pad is not good.

N.B.—Men and women carry load-pads on their heads. The proverb is our "Bad workmen complain of their tools."

200.

Dsee noko, si noko dsi no.

"It is nothing!"—but that is something.

N.B.—"Dsee noko" is a general evasive answer to enquiries; the proverb is the reply of the man who will not be put off. In the Oji dialect the precisely similar saying is, "Enye biribi, na eye biribi ara nen.

201.

Ke batafo ke: dsee enan ena non.

If the wild boar say it is not his foot-print, still it is it.

202.

Moko efee kolo sii enyo.

Nobody is twice a fool.

203.

Eto tso egbe eno.

He cut a tree, and fell over it himself.

N.B.—Cf. Proverbs xxviii. 10: "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit."

204.

Moko hie gboo sii enyo.

Nobody is twice ashamed.

205.

Moni ena da le, eke ehi.

He who has wine says it is good.

N.B.—See No. 150. The Hindi proverb is, "No one calls his own butter-milk sour."

206.

Mlikpamo dsi nii dsikule alomte ye eko.

If stretching were wealth, the cat would be rich.

207.

Yitso kome eyaa adsina.

One head does not go a-counselling.

208.

Ohia ni ehia Akuamunyo hewo ni eke Ayigbenyo nio.

On account of the poverty that affects the Akwamumau, he calls himself a man of Ayigbe.

N.B.—Akwamu is the name of a tribe on the Volta River, about fifty miles from its mouth. The Ayigbe is part of the people known to us as Krepe, or Eipe people; they call themselves Ewe and their tongue Wegbe. They live on the east and west of the Volta River, and, being near the sea, are wealthier than their inland brethren.

209.

Ke ofie kolo le ni o haale gbe, etsoono.

If thou drive a beast and give it no way, it turns upon thee.

210.

Noni gbekebii fe ye klotia le, no onukpai le feo ye ma le mli.

What the children do at the ends (*of the town*), that the elders do in the town.

211.

Moko ke sisai gbaa ta.

Nobody wars with ghosts.

212.

Moko den dsee oden.

Somebody's hand is not thy hand.

213.

Noko ni ayee le, ahoo.

What is not eaten is not cooked.

214.

Fio ebe kose dsikule kule wo kolo wulu dsile.

Were no elephant in the jungle, the buffalo would be a great animal.

215.

Opasafo ke: Midasefo ye Akyem.

Saith the liar, "My witness is in Akyem.

N.B.—Akyem is here used for any far place.

216.

Tsu moko nwei ni hwan esisi atfere.

To send some one up and to draw away the ladder from under him.

217.

Abolo flo ehii yeli.

Dry bread is not good eating.

218.

Noko eko onufu!

Something has bitten the serpent!

219.

Adum ke: Ewon dsi ehinmei.

The Adum (*monkey*) saith, "My eye be my fetish" (*or protecting charm*).

N.B.—Under the word "won" Mr. Zimmermann thus explains "African theology." According to the people of Accra, on the Gold Coast, God (*Nyonmo*) is the highest being, the only Creator of Heaven and Earth. The "fetishes" (*wodsi*), heaven, earth, sea, rivers, trees, and similar objects, are sub-deities, spiritual and personal, who direct and govern the world. There are also demons,

male and female, good and bad, common to all the fetishes, or confined to a part, to a tribe, a town, a family, or a single person. A person may possess a fetish, or demon, or be possessed by one. "Besides which, there are innumerable things, consecrated to, belonging to, or made effectual by, a fetish—as cords (*wonkpai*) to be tied about the body, or the house; teeth, chains, rings, &c., worn, and the like, which gave rise to the absurd belief, that the African makes everything, even a bottle or a cork, his god: and hasty travellers and other people, not having time to ask and to learn, have sustained this saying, whilst a comparison with religious things and superstitions in the very heart of Christendom would have fully explained the matter without casting the African together, no more with men, but with brutes."

220.

Akeo ekome dani akeo enyo.

People say "one" before they say "two."

221.

Toi ni gbaa nabu na.

It is the ear that troubles the mouth.

V.

PROVERBS

IN

THE YORUBA LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE.

THE Yoruba, popularly called the "Aku" language, is spoken by at least two millions of souls, inhabiting a country whose area is not less than 50,000 square miles. This area is bounded on the north by the tribes speaking Barba or Borghu, by the Takpas * (Tappas) of Nufe, and by the other races accolent to the Kwara (Quorra) River: to the south is the Atlantic washing the Bight of Benin; eastward are the various tongues of the Niger Proper, especially the Ibo (Eboe); and westward lies the Gold Coast family of languages.

The Yorubas—though, like all other pure Africans, they have not attempted literature or science—speak a tongue tolerably rich in abstract terms, showing that they are not deficient in a certain power of thought. It is asserted by missionaries that of late they have "begun to feel the aspirations of intellect." Having no ballads, no songs, and but few popular stories, their language abounds in "Owe," or proverbs, which are at once the ethics and the poetics of the people. Many of

* The Takpa or Nufe people are considered the swiftest of men; hence the Yorubas say, A'sa ni Takpa eiye, "The falcon is the Takpa of birds."

them are sententious observations on the nature of things; others are designed to inculcate the relative duties of men; and a few are simply riddles, or an ingenious play upon words, called Alo.* The following 124 specimens are extracted from the work of the Rev. Mr. Bowen †:—

1.

Ete i mo ete ni iko oran ba ereke.

Mouth not keeping to mouth, and lip not keeping to lip, bring trouble to the jaws.

N.B.—Talk is silver, silence is gold.

2.

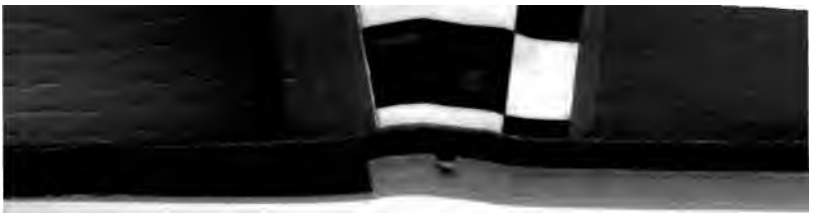
Amoran mo owe, i ladza (*or* ni ilaju) oran.

A wise man (*or councillor*), who knows proverbs, (*soon*) reconciles difficulties.

* Hence "Apalo" is a riddle maker or enigmatist: Apalo patita, "he who makes a trade of telling riddles," reminding us of certain civilized diners out, who keep a "riddle book." There is another form of language, called "Ena," which somewhat corresponds with our "costermongers' slang," or "thieves' Latin." It is an "inversion of the order of letters, syllables, words, or sentences, under which the sense is concealed or changed: occasionally employed by those who wish to communicate privately, and to disguise the sense from the bystanders; *e. g.*, De mi, babba, 'cover me, father,' employed to signify, Babba mi de, 'My father is come.'"

† Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruba Language, by the Rev. T. J. Bowen, Missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Accepted for publication by the Smithsonian Institution, May 1858.

I have not changed the author's orthography, necessarily omitting the diacritical points and tone-marks.



3.

Nikpa ise owo ti wah.

By labour comes wealth.

N.B.—"Labor improbus omnia vincit."

4.

Eni aba ko to bi eni ore: eni aba ko se ika, rirun ni i run womwom.

A grass mat does not last like a bulrush mat: a grass mat will not bend; it breaks to pieces.

5.

Abaiyedze ko se ifi idi oran han.

It will not do to reveal one's secrets to a tattler.

N.B.—A common sentiment.

6.

Aba *(abba)* **ko se ikan mo ni li ese, bikose eni ti nse buburu.**

The stocks are not fastened on the foot of one, except of him who does evil.

N.B.—The African aba (abba), or stocks, called in Zanzibar "Mukantala," are formed by a large iron staple containing the ankle, and with ends driven into a heavy log. Mr. Crowther's translation is, "The stocks are not pleasant, but they are good for a rogue."

7.

Abata takete, bienikpe ko ba odo tan.

The marsh (*or pool*) stands aloof, as if it were not akin to the stream.

N.B.—Said of people who are proud and reserved, or who pretend to be what they are not.

8.

Bi odzumo mo, olowo gbe owo, iranwu a gbe, keke, adzagun a gbe akpata, iwonso a bere gbe asa, agbe a dzi ti on ti aruko, omo-ode a dzi ti akpo ti oron.

When the day dawns the trader betakes himself to his trade;

The spinner takes her distaff (*or spindle*), the warrior takes his shield;

The weaver bends over his Asa, or sley (i.e., *stoops to his batten*);

The farmer awakes, he and his hoe-handle;

The hunter awakes with his quiver and bow.

N.B.—This has been noted by both Messrs. Vidal and Bowen as a correct and picturesque description of the daybreak scene in every Yoruban town. It also means to inculcate that no one should remain idle.

9.

Ebi ko kpa Imale, o li on ki idze aya.

When the Imale (*Yoruban proselyte to El Islam*) is not hungry, he says, "I never eat monkey-flesh."

N.B.—Meaning, that when he is hungry he is not so scrupulous about a food ceremonially forbidden.

10.

A ki iru eran erin li ori ki a ma fi ese tan ire ni ile.

One never carries elephant's flesh on his head that he may dig in the ground with his foot for crickets.

N.B.—One who has plenty of elephant's flesh, in Yoruba considered good food, does not put it on his head and go about searching for crickets, poor man's diet, to eat. This proverb is applied to the "*richard*" who stoops to mean actions for the sake of saving.

11.

Kpikpe ni yi o kpe, eke ko mu ara.

A long time may pass before one is caught in a lie (lit., *a lie will not go to oblivion*).

N.B.—But detection comes at last.

12.

Amu ni se esin; ete ti imu ni li agogo imo.

The slanderer brings disgrace on one, like a leprosy which attacks one on the point of the nose (*where all can see it*).

N.B.—Said of one who tells another's faults in public.

13.

Abanise mah ba ni se mo.

He is a helper that helps no more.

N.B.—Meaning, that he is a person no longer to be depended upon.

14.

Akuko gagara ni idadzo fu ni li arin ogandzo.

A large cock * decides for us in the midst of the night (*as to the time of night*).

N.B.—Persons are supposed to be disputing about the time of night, when the crowing of the cock shows that it is very late: the proverb may be quoted whenever a dispute is suddenly decided by unexpected evidence.

15.

Akobi ni ti eleran.

The first-born is the shepherd's.

N.B.—When a woman takes a she goat or a ewe—both of which are termed "Eran"—to feed, she claims from the owner the first-born kid or lamb. Curious to say, Mr. Crowther translates this "the first-born is due to the owner" (*not to the shepherd who takes care of it*).

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* Literally, a cock of largeness—so "Ohun didara," a thing of goodness, *i.e.*, a good thing; "igi ulanla," tree of bigness, *i.e.*, a big tree; and many other instances. The reader may thus judge of the justice of Mr. Cooley's remarks—"'Mountain of whiteness' for 'white mountain' is a piece of affectation, of which we believe the honest African incapable." ("Inner Africa Laid Open," p. 107.) Had Mr. Cooley learned a little more of the Africans and their languages, he would have

16.

Ibaluwe gbe ile, se bi akuro.

Although the bath-room (*or scullery*) is in the house, it is as wet as a garden by the water side.

17.

Ologbon ogbon li a ro idzanu; okokan li a mo iwa enia; a ba mo iwa enia, a ba bun o, ko fe; a don ni bi abadzo.

On various plans (*bridle-*) bits are made; one by one we learn the characters of men: the character of a man being known (*to be bad*), if it were given thee as a present, thou wouldst not desire it; it is painful to one as a calamity.

18.

Ti idzo ti ayo ni ise idin, wuye wuye ni ise igongo: a ndzo, a nyo: omo banabana nre oko igi.

With dancing and joy moves the maggot; wriggling about to and fro (*with pleasure*) moves the worm: they dance, they rejoice; but the child of the Banabana is going to the wood farm (*or toils on at its wood cutting*).

N.B.—The Banabana is an insect that carries a bit of wood in its mouth, and this is an emblem of the poor, who must fetch fuel from the farms. The proverb will thus mean, "others may amuse themselves, but the poor man has no holiday."

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found that in many of the dialects the almost entire absence of adjectives necessitates a phraseology so distasteful to him. In the Isubu, for instance, the only way to express a rich man is "motu a bori"—a man of riches; a good man becomes "motu a bwam"—a man of goodness; and so on.

19.

A ki iwa alaso ala ni iso elekpo.

We do not look for a man clad in white cloth in the quarters of the palm-oil maker.

N.B.—We should not expect any result from incongruous or inadequate means.

20.

Okete ni, odzo gbogbo li o mo; on ko mo odzo miran.

The rat says he knows every day; but he does not know another day (*so as to lay up something for it*). Mr. Crowther renders it—"The Okete says, 'I understand (*what you mean by*) a specified day, (*but, the indefinite expression*) another day I do not understand.'"

N.B.—Said of the spendthrift and the improvident.

21.

Odzu kokoro baba okandzua.

Covetousness is the father of unsatisfied desires.

22.

Ologbo babu arokin.

The ologbo is the father of traditionists.

N.B.—"Ologbo" is the title of one of the king's privy counsellors, who also acts the part of chronicler or narrator of ancient traditions.

23.

Alagbara (*or* agbara) mah mo ero baba ole.

A strong man who is destitute of forethought is the father of laziness. Mr. Crowther translates, "A strong man who is a spendthrift (*may be called*) the father of idleness."

24.

Eni ti ko gbo ti ega, a li ega nkpatoto enu.

One who does not understand the yellow palm-bird says the yellow palm-bird is noisy (i.e., *a mere chatterer: but the birds are supposed to understand one another*).

N.B.—This proverb means that men are prone to despise what they do not understand.

25.

Eleda eda li Olorun da ni.

The Lord of Heaven has created us with different natures.

N.B.—We must not expect to find the same qualities in all men.

26.

Bi alagbara dze o ni iya, ki ofi erin si i.

If a great (*or powerful*) man should wrong you, smile upon him.

N.B.—Because resistance would bring upon you a still greater misfortune.

27.

Alakpata ko mo iru eran.

The butcher has no regard for the breed of the beast (*which he kills*).

N.B.—He attends to his own business, and does not meddle with matters which do not concern him.

28.

Igbo biribiri, okunkun biribiri; okunkun ni yi o sete igbo.

The forest is (*very*) dark, and the night is (*very*) dark: the darkness of the night will soon conquer (*or is deeper than*) that of the forest.

29.

Bi ko se obon enia, tani iba dzi li ouro ki o mah bo odzu re mo sasa.

Except a sloven, who is wont to rise in the morning without washing his face nicely?

30.

Emu bale agbede.

The tongs are at the head of (*or governor in*) the blacksmith's shop.

N.B.—Because they control the hot iron, which without them would be unmanageable.

31.

Oso onibudze ko kpe isan, oso oninabi ko dzu odun loh.

The osho or tattoo-painting of the Buje-woman lasts not nine days; the tattooing of the Inabi-woman lasts not a year.

N.B.—Osho means the deep black stripes with which professional women ornament the arms and faces of maidens. Buje is the fruit of a small tree of the same name, and when green it makes a pretty stain on the skin. According to Mr. Bowen there is a fable of a beautiful jet-black girl who refused in marriage all the great men of the country; at last a worthless fellow enticed her into his house, and detained her all night. She escaped uninjured, but the community thought otherwise, and she fled to the woods, where the violence of her grief metamorphosed her into the bush that still bears her name—Buje. The Inabi is a plant whose acrid root blisters and burns in a durable dark mark, and therefore rarely used in tattooing. The moral of the saying is that no advantage or possession is permanent.

32.

Bi adza ba li, eni lehin, a kpa obo.

If a dog has a man to back him he will kill a baboon.

N.B.—Showing the advantage of sustaining and encouraging people in their efforts.

33.

Adza ti ko li eti ko se idegbe.

A heedless dog will not do for the chase.

N.B.—If a person will not take advice, no one will employ or trust him.

34.

Gagalo subu, owo te akpako.

If a man let fall his Gagalo (*stilts, made from the midrib of the akpako, wine-palm, or R. vinifera*) a hand will be stretched out to seize them.

N.B.—That is, so soon as one man loses office or position another is ready to take his place. Mr. Crowther says it is applied to any aspirant who monopolises for awhile some desired object, which, on his overthrow, falls into the hand of some one else. So we say, "Pride will have a fall."

35.

A ki da owo le ohun ti a ko le igbe.

We should not undertake a thing which we cannot lift (i.e., *perform*).

36.

Onile ndze eso gbingbindo; aledzo ni ki a se on li owo kan ewa.

(*Though*) the host may be living on wild beans, the guest expects a handful of boiled corn.

N.B.—Mr. Crowther translates "Gbingbindo" by a "tree, found near the water, whose fruit is eaten only in time of famine," and says that the proverb applies to those who are unreasonable in their demands.

37.

Mah gbiyele ogun; ti owo eni ni ito ni.

Trust not to an inheritance; the produce of one's hands is sufficient for one (*or what one gains by industry is sufficient*).

N.B.—Said to those who neglect industry because they expect to inherit property.

38.

Akoseba, eye ti idzè odun.

He who waits for chance may wait a year.

N.B.—Said to those who are ever looking for "something to turn up."

39.

Eni ti o ran ni ni ise li a iberu; a ki iberu eni ti a ran ni si.

We should fear him who sends us with a message, not him to whom we are sent.

N.B.—Applied to messengers sent from one king or chief to another.

40.

Ero-kpesekpese; ko mo bi ara nkan igbin.

(*You may say the blow is*) very light—you do not reflect that it hurts the snail.

N.B.—Said to those who excuse their maltreatment of others on the ground that it is no great matter.

41.

Esin ri ogun, dzo; okeo ri ogun, o yo.

When the spear sees the battle, it dances; when the lance sees the battle, it joys.

42.

Ohun ti a fi eso mu ki badze; ohun ti a fi agbara mu ni ini ni li ara.

An affair which we conduct with gentleness is not marred; an affair which we conduct with violence causes us vexation.

N.B.—Said to irritable and impetuous men.

43.

Bi eya ba di ekun, eran ni ikpa dze.

When the wild cat becomes a leopard, it will devour large beasts.

44.

Afedzu toto ko mo okonri.

Frowning and fierceness prove not manliness.

N.B.—Dogs that bark don't bite.

45.

Oko nla se alamgba kpensan; o ni, behe li eni ti o dzu ni hlo ise ni.

A large stone (*being thrown*) crushed a lizard. It said —"So he who is stronger than one treats one."

N.B.—Alluding to the strong oppressing the weak, "C'est le pot de terre contre le pot de fer." Mr. Crowther translates "Alambga," "the male lizard."

46.

Alantakun bi yi o ba o dza, a ta ka o li ara.

When the spider would attack thee, it extends its web to entangle thee.

N.B.—Applied to the intrigues of men who endeavour to ruin others. The spider is not in Yoruba, as on the Gold Coast, symbolic either of Creation or of the Evil Principle.

47.

Alasedzu kpere ni ite.

A self-willed man soon has disgrace.

N.B.—Meaning, that pride goes before destruction. "Quem Deus perdere vult, prius dementat."

48.

Esu yi o dze, esu ye o mo, esu yi o loh; nibo li alatamkpoko yi o wo.

The locust will eat, the locust will drink, the locust will go;—where shall the grasshopper hide?

N.B.—Describes the effects of war.

49.

Ko si alasara ti ita igboku; gbogbo won ni ita oyin.

No (*she*) snuff-dealer sells stale snuff; they all sell the best (literally, *all of them sell snuff honey.*)

N.B.—So Oti or beer of the best quality is called by the street-girls "honey-beer."

50.

Alaradze ko mo odun; abi isu ita bi igi.

The buyer does not consider the seasons; he thinks, perhaps, yams grow as big as logs.

N.B.—But the grower and seller does. Mr. Crowther translates the proverb thus, "a buyer knows nothing of the seasons of the year, but his yam must always be as large as a billet," because his money enables him to purchase the best of everything.

51.

A se alakpa li oso, ko gbo; a se ohun gbogbo fu igi, o ye igi.

If one ornament an old wall, it is not improved; if he do anything for wood (*by painting or carving*), it is adapted to the wood (i.e., *it is advantageous*).

N.B.—Our design is accomplished by making the wood as we desire it to be. The proverb insinuates that some persons are not to be improved by any means that we can employ.

52.

Awigbo ti ifi owo adzae mo omi.

Disobedience will drink water with his hand tied to his neck.

N.B.—Meaning, that a person who is determined to disobey will have his own way in spite of all obstacles.

53.

Afomo ko li egbo; igi gbogbo ni ibatan.

A parasite has no root; every tree is its kindred.

N.B.—A "chevalier d'industrie" does not care where or on whom he lives.

54.

Eru ko se omo igi: eru ku, iya ko gbo: omo ku, igbe ta; eru se omo ni ile iya re ri.

A slave is not the child of a tree (i.e., *a block of wood*): if a slave dies, his mother does not hear of it; if a (*free-born*) child dies, lamentation is made: (*yet*) the slave (*too*) was once a child in his mother's house.

N.B.—Domestic slavery is the rule in Yoruba, and as in other countries where it prevails, the bondman is kindly treated—becoming, in fact, one of the family.

55.

Ada san igbo, ko ri ere igbo: o ro ona, ko ri ere ona; ada da idakuda, ada da idakuda; ada da, o fi arun gbadi, o di oko olowo; ada li eka li oron, o gbadza girigiri.

The bill-hook clears the farm, but receives no profit from the farm; the bill-hook clears the road, but receives no profit from the road; the bill-hook is badly broken, the bill-hook is badly bent; the bill-hook breaks, it pays five cowries to gird its handle with a ring; it reaches its owner's farm; (*when*) the bill-hook has a (*new*) ring on its neck (*or handle*), it is girded tightly (*for new labours*).

N.B.—Has reference to the unrequited labour of slaves.

56.

Ibi ki idzu ibi; bi a ti bi eru li a bi omo.

One birth does not differ from (*another*) birth; as the slave was born, so was the free-born child.

57.

Bi o ti wu ki o ri, a ki rerin abiron; boya ohun ti o se e loni a se iwo lola.

One should never laugh at a sick person; perhaps what afflicts him to-day may afflict thee to-morrow.

58.

Iwo ni nse abodzuwo liehin baba; todzu ile rere.

Thou art the superintendent in the master's absence; look well to the house!

59.

Ni igba ti agbe ba ndi abo oka, ino re a don; nikpa abo oka ni yangidi owo iti wah.

When the farmer is tying up corn-sheaves he rejoices; from bundles of corn come bundles of money.

60.

Ohun ti ise ohun abukun ki a mah se si omo-enikedzi eni.

A contemptuous action should not be done to our fellow-man.

61.

Abule ni mu aso ilo to; eni ti ko ba se todzu abule yi o se ara re li ofo aso.

Patching makes a garment last long; one who does not attend to patching will come to want clothes.

N.B.—Meaning, that a man who neglects little details of business will fail. Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.

62.

Bi a ti ran ni ni ise, li a dze; bi iwo ba seni si i, adabowo ara re.

As one is sent on a message, so he should deliver it; if thou add anything to it, it is on thine own responsibility.

63.

Adan dorikodo o nwo ise eiye gbogbo.

The bat hangs with its head down, watching the actions of all birds.

N.B.—This teaches silent observation.

64.

O dze aiye dzu alaiye loh.

He enjoys the world more than the owner of the world.

N.B.—Said of the extravagant.

65.

Dolumo ekpa li oron sese, a dzebi oran wo ti.

The slander of the ground-nut (*a hypogæa*) against the white field-pea (*a climbing bean*) falls upon itself: he who is in the wrong must sit quietly apart.

N.B.—Meaning that a slanderer may injure himself more than he injures the slandered.

66.

Obanidze o ba ara re dze.

He who injures (*or despises*) another, injures (*or despises*) himself.*

67.

Abanidze mah ba ni se ifa enia; eni ti o dze didon ni idze kikan.

A guest (literally, *one who eats of the same dish*) who is no advantage to a person is selfish; he who eats the sweet should also eat the sour (*or bitter*).

N.B.—Said of persons who live on others, and will not assist in the labours of the family.

68.

Abati alakpa; a ba a ti, a ba a re.

It is a shakey wall; we push against it, and (*finding that it does not fall*) we make friends with it (*by sitting down in its shade*).

N.B.—Said of persons whom we suspected at first, but with whom we become friends.

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* It is impossible to determine how many of such sayings have been borrowed from the Moslems, who in the 10th century overran the Sudan, and left many descendants. Amongst other traces of their customs, we may observe that pieces of stick, called "kponga," are placed crosswise over the body in the grave to prevent the earth from touching it. So also they say, "Saraha babba ebo"—alms are the father of (i.e., *the best of*) sacrifice. "Sara," or "Saraha" is the Moslem term for legal alms, and the Yoruban equivalent is "oreanu." Mr. Crowther erroneously asserts, "as used by the Mohammedans, these gifts are very much akin to actual sacrifice."

69.

Abebe ni ibe iku, abebe ni ibe oran; bi oru ba mu, abebe ni ibe e.

A pleader (*or supplicator to the gods*) wards off death, a pleader (*with the judge*) wards off a difficulty (*or punishment*); if the heat is severe, a fan mitigates it.

N.B.—There is a play upon the words "abèbe," a pleader, and "abebe," a fan of hide generally used by the upper classes. The proverb also shows the power of pleading in its sense of entreaty.

70.

Iyan mu, ire yo; iyan ro, ire ru.

When famine is sharp, the cricket is fat; when famine is relieved, the cricket is poor.

N.B.—The paranomasia—a play upon various sounds difficult to pronounce in rapid succession—is somewhat paradoxical; it means, that during hunger the cricket is eaten as if it were fat or delicious; but when the dearth is over, the cricket is rejected as poor, and unfit to eat.

71.

Odzo, kpa batta bata, batta bata, li ori akpata, li ode adzalubata; bata li igi, batta li awo.

The rain beats "shoe-drum, shoe-drum" (i.e., *patter, patter*) on the rock in the yard of the chief drummer; the drum is wood, and the shoe is leather.

N.B.—A play upon the word "akpata," a rock, containing a frequent repetition of *b* and *t* sounds. Mr. Crowther translates: "The rain on the 'batta' (*shoes*) goes patter, patter, as on the 'akpata' (*rock*): in the street of the 'ajalubata' (*head drummer*), the 'bata' (*drum*) is wood, the 'batta' (*shoes*) are skin."

72.

Kanakana ba kanakana dza, kanakana da kanakana, —eni! *or* odi-eni.

A crow fought with a crow, a crow conquered a crow.—One (or once)!

N.B.—The Yorubas amuse themselves by repeating as many times as possible, without taking breath, sentences such as the foregoing, containing a recurrence of similar sounds—a good gymnastic for the tongue. At the end of each repetition of the sentence, a bystander cries "one," "two," &c.; and he who repeats the sentence oftenest without a fault is victor. So boys with us learn to say "Oliver Oglethorpe ogled an owl and an oyster;" "Peter Piper picked a peck of pepper," &c. &c. &c.

73.

Ose ni isadzu ekun, abamo ni igbchin oran; gbogbo otokulu kpe, nwon ko ri ebo abamo se.

As smacking of the lips (i.e., *sorrow*) precedes weeping, so mortification follows a difficulty (*or grievous matter*); the whole population of the town assemble, but cannot find a sacrifice against mortification.

N.B.—The Yoruba people are accustomed to smack their lips several times before they begin to weep, and the noise is called "oshe."

74.

Ikpa obere li okun ito.

The thread follows the needle.

N.B—Applied to anything which happens as a natural consequence. Our "trumps" or *Comme!*

75.

Abose ki ise ise odzo; ise baba ni igba odzo eni.

A job (*done for one's self*) is not the day's work (*or chief business of the slaves*); the master's work claims the chief part of one's time.

N.B.—Said to slaves, who may perform little jobs for themselves, but must not neglect their master's business.

76.

Adaridzini ni isete, edzo.

He that forgives (*the aggressor*) gains the victory in (*or ends*) the dispute.

N.B.—Inculcates a forgiving spirit.

77.

Bi Olorun ba ka ese si ni li oron, a gbe.

If God should compute our sins, we should perish.*

78.

Fi ohun we ohun, fi oran we oran; fi oran dzin, ki a yin o.

Compare thing with thing, compare matter with matter: and then forgive (*the matter*) that thou mayest be praised.

N.B.—This proverb inculcates the duties of examining the facts of a dispute—"Audi alteram partem"—and of exercising a forgiving disposition.

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* Mr. Bowen observes, "I have heard this remark made by heathens in attempting to settle disputes, but am not sure that it is a national proverb." Most probably Nos. 76 and 77 are borrowed from Moslems.

79.

Abere bo li owo adete, o di ete; oran ba ile, o di ero.

If a needle fall from a leper's (*mutilated*) hand, it requires consideration (*how to pick it up*); if a difficult matter come upon the country (*or before the council*), it requires thought (*how to avert it*).

80.

Adintanmo esuo ti o li ekulu li o bi iya re.

It is like the genealogy of the Esuo, who said his grandmother was an Ekulu.

N.B.—The "Esuo" and the "Ekulu," which Mr. Crowther translates "deer," are the different species of antelope. The proverb applies to those who claim descent from great families.

81.

Elede kpa afo tan, o nwa eni rere ti yi o fi ara re yi.

The pig, having done wallowing in the mire, is seeking some clean person to rub against.

N.B.—It resembles our fable of the monkey that had lost its tail, and is said of disgraced men who would intrude themselves upon society.

82.

Onifura ti itete ise onile kpele.

A suspicious character (*being found in the house*) immediately salutes the owner of the house (*before he is saluted*).

83.

Agada ko mo ori alagbede.

The Agada (*short sword*) does not know the head of the blacksmith (*who made it*).

N.B.—This and the following are said of the ungrateful.

84.

Agbedze gba won la, a ni ki a kpa a ni kpansa.

The calabash having saved them (*in time of famine*), they said, "Let us cut it for a drinking cup."

85.

A ri abanidze agbon isale; bi o ku li owuro, a ya li ale.

We meet with guests who are like the lower jaw; if one die in the morning, it separates (*from the upper jaw*) in the evening.

N.B.—Alluding to those who forsake their friends in time of trouble.

86.

Akparo dzare adzanakpa, ki li o, mu aso wah ise li oko? A dzare akparo, li oko li a gbe imu aso iloh.

The partridge argued concerning the bird-snare of cloth, "Why did the farmer bring cloth to the farm?" He replied to the partridge, "We are accustomed to take our over-clothes to the farm."*

* Mr. Crowther translates it far better. "The partridge says, 'What business has the farmer to bring his cloth here?' The farmer says, 'How could I come to my farm without cloth?'"

N.B.—The partridge, seeing a cloth so spread out as to form a bird-snare, was suspicious, and said, "What does he mean by this?" The farmer replied that people always bring their wrappers to the farm, laying them on the grass or bush while at work. The proverb asserts, with Sir Roger de Coverley, that there is much to be said on both sides of a question.

Mu properly means to catch, but has many significations. Hence the general use of catch in African-English, *e. g.*, "he catch ten," for "there were ten," &c.

87.

Adze, Saluga, o fi eni iwadzu sile se eni ehin ni kpele.*

Aje (*God of Fortune, or rather Money*), the elevator, he leaves the foremost to deal favourably with the hindmost.

N.B.—Meaning, that the first may sometimes be last, and the last first—that the battle and the race are not always to the strong and the swift.

88.

Adze, omo he-iya mi soro ga, (*or* mi sho wogan,) a kpa mah gbagun.

The witch, child of envy—my troubles are sore and hard—she kills but cannot inherit.

N.B.—The witch in Yoruba, like the Vampire in Greece, destroys people when asleep by sucking their blood. So the Jigar-

* Mr. Crowther adds, "o ri ki oran ki o tan," and translates the whole, "Aje often passes by the first caravan, as it comes to market, and loads the last with blessings."

khwar in Persia eats their livers. Mr. Crowther declares the owl to be the bird into which the witch passes when wishing to work evil: it is certainly much feared by the Krumen.

89.

Adzekasu ko mo bi iyan mu.

The man who has bread to eat (literally, *one who eats the large loaf*) does not appreciate the severity of a famine.

90.

Akeke ti nke igi ko se; gbenagbena mbu etu si atari.

The axe which cuts the tree is not afraid; but the woodman makes a sacrifice to his head.*

N.B.—Some kinds of trees are supposed to be inhabited by evil spirits like the Hindoo Rakshasa, which might cause the axe to cut the woodman, unless the latter offered a sacrifice to his good genius, which resides in the head.

91.

Abetele ni ifodzu onidadzo; notori abetele ki ile ise idadzo otito.

A bribe blinds the judge, for a bribe cannot give a true judgment (*or even speak the truth*).

* Mr. Crowther prefixes Ake kan wo igbo agbo okiki, "An axe enters a forest; we hear a sound."

92.

Bi o kun oni kun ola ki ogbe, ki o kpa agiliti, odzo a ro.

If there remain to-day or to-morrow before the iguana will die of thirst, rain will surely fall.

N.B.—This proverb shows the providence of the Creator over his creatures.

93.

Fi idza, fu Olorun dza; fi owo la eran.

Leave the battle to God, and rest your head (*or temple*) upon your hand (*as a spectator*).

N.B.—This favourite proverb of *one* of the Yoruba chiefs inculcates trust in the protection of the Almighty, like many similar sayings, as "take no thought for the morrow," which are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. "Aide toi, et Dieu t' aidera," is the apophthegm of a northern climate.

94.

Tinotino tehintehin ni labalaba ifi iyin fu Olorun.

(*By its beauty*) the butterfly praises God within and without (i.e., *in all its parts*).* Mr. Crowther adds *labalaba ku li ilewu*, and translates the whole, "Behind and before the butterfly praises God (i.e., *it is beautiful all over*), though (*when touched*) it crumbles into dust like a cinder."

* This proverb again shows distinctly the influence of Semitic thought.

95.

Dzi agba oti, dzi agba etu; eni ti a ran wah, ki idzi agba.

Open the cask of rum, open the keg of powder (*if yours*); he that is sent with it dares not open the cask.

N.B.—Alludes to the fidelity of the Yorụba carriers, who are honest as the Arrieros of Spain and Teneriffe.

96.

Ogun ko ro ike, agbede ko ro bata; oko ko soro ro agbede ko kpa oko ta.

Ogun (*the god of blacksmiths and soldiers*) does not work ivory, the blacksmith does not work leather; if the farm were not hard to till, the blacksmith would not make hoes for sale.

N.B.—Every man to his trade. "Nẹ sutor ultra crepidam."

97.

Ile kan wa li Oyo ni igba atidzo, ti a nkpe Akidze, Oibo ku mbe.

In old times there was a house in Oyo (*Eyeo or Katunga*) called Silence: an Oibo or white man died there.

N.B—Historical and other facts are often thus transmitted to posterity. Oyo, pronounced Auyau, is the ancient capital of the Yoruba Empire, destroyed by the Fulas in 1835. The word Oibo, or "Eibo" (*Ambo in the Iketu dialect*), from Bo, to greet, means a white man; hence "Orombo," an orange—literally, White man's fruit.

98.

O sure iku, o bo si ako ida.*

He fled from the sword, and hid in the scabbard (*into which the sword will return*).

N.B.—The same as our saying, "Out of the frying-pan into the fire."

99.

A ri ti eni mo iwi, i fi akpadi bo ti re mole.

We see that one knows how to speak (*the faults of others*), although he covers his own with a potsherd.

N.B.—"Tu vois une paille qui est dans l'œil de ton frère, mais tu ne vois pas ce qui est dans ton œil."

100.

A ki igba akaka lowo akiti; a ki igba ile baba lowo eni.

We cannot prevent a baboon squatting (*because it is his nature*); he cannot take from a man his homestead (*because it is his natural right.*)†

* Mr. Crowther also gives, Mo sa osa iku, mo si bo si akko idas.

† Mr. Crowther gives, besides this one, another version of the first clause: Aki igba Agballe lowo Arabi, *i.e.*, "No one can separate the Agballe from the Arabi"—two insects always found together.

101.

Ase oran ikoko sebi on li a mbawi, abi ara ifu bi eni se ohun.

The perpetrator of a secret crime supposes it is he they are talking about (*if he sees men in conversation*); his face being pale as one who has done something wrong.

N.B.—"Stultè nudabit animi conscientiam."

102.

Asorokele bodzuwo igbe; igbe ki iro; eni ti a ba so ni ese ikukpani.

A whisperer watches the bush (*if he hears a noise*); a bush never tells secrets; he to whom one speaks is the traitor.

N.B.—If a man wish his secrets to be kept, he should not confide them to others.

103.

Odo ki kon ki o bo edza li odzu.

The river is never so full as to obscure the sight of the fish.

N.B.—No scheme or purpose is too deep to be confided to a friend—somewhat contradictory to No. 102.

104.

Baba bo baba mole.

A great affair covers up (*or puts out of sight*) a small matter.

105.

Bagadai! igi du oloko sa,

By the staff of Egugun! the tree fell and startled the farmer.

N.B.—Bagadai is a common oath. Egun or Egugun—(lit., bones) is the Mumbo-Jumbo of Yoruban mythology. The proverb suggests "Parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus."

106.

Ebo alakoto.

"The sacrifice in the basket"—a euphuism for human sacrifice; probably because, as at Dahome, the victim, placed in a kind of basket-work canoe, was precipitated from a high platform and beheaded. In Yoruba a sacrifice is sometimes offered for the whole nation, when the victim is either killed or is kept alive in chains to sweep the idols' temples.

107.

Elekun, *or* Isokun.

A weeper, a mourner, and figuratively a daughter, who in Asia is called the "domestic calamity." So the people say "O bi isokun, o bi iwale," he begat a mourner and a grave-digger (i.e., *a son*).

108.

Elemi.

One who has breath—a servant; so called, because his master's life is in his hands.

109.

Bi enia enni ba ku li okere akpa eta re wo ille.

When a relative dies at a distance, a small fragment of his remains is brought home.

N.B.—Eta is a fragment of a corpse (such as his hair or nails) brought home to the family, who perform over it funeral rites.

110.

Idi baba akosa.

The eagle is the father of birds of prey.

111.

Odudua, igba nla medzi a de i si.

Heaven and earth, two large calabashes, shut not to be open.

112.

Ogo.

A person sitting daily at another's door, to shame him into payment of a debt.

N.B.—Equivalent to the well-known custom, "dharna bait'hna," of the Hindus.

113.

Aditi wo ni li enu sun.

The deaf look surprised on people's mouths (*when speaking*).

114.

Asongon obiri asowo mah de odza.

A long slender trading woman, who never reaches the market.

N.B.—A riddle, meaning a canoe, which is left at the landing-place when the owner goes to the market. So in Hindi—That which follows every one, *i.e.*, a shadow.

115.

Ogun kun Osa kun o kun tirin ko kpade.

There remain the "Ogun" (*river*), the "Osa" (*lake*), and the slender, which you have not met (i.e., *crossed.*)

N.B.—Meaning the nose.

116.

Agbongbere kpete igara.

The snatch game (*of children*) resembles (lit., *thinks of*) robbery.

N.B.—Agbongbere is a child's play of snatching vegetables from one another.

117.

Onibaba ni itodzu orombo, onide ni itodzu awede.

The owner of copper ornaments looks for (*the fruit of*) a lemon, the owner of brass looks for "Awede."

N.B.—Awede is a herb used for cleaning brass. The saying means, "Each man for himself."

118.

Ena awon.

Fire of tortoise—*i.e.*, mirage, the flickering appearance of the atmosphere in hot dry weather. It is supposed to be an underground fire made by the tortoise to kill the trees, by burning them at the roots.

119.

Edofofo.

A liver of foam—*i.e.*, irascibility. Among Africans, as Asiatics, the liver is the seat of the passions and affections; hence "Gbodo" (i.e. *gba edo, to receive liver*) means to dare, to be courageous. So, in olden England, the spleen, and in modern times, the heart, usurp the functions of the brain.

120.

Fun le fo lorun.

Freely, of one's own accord (lit., *for the earth and for God*).

121.

Odzu, re wah ile.

He came to himself (*after being mad or drunk;* lit., *his eye came to the ground*).

122.

Bafin, *or* **Ibafin.**

Eunuchs, of whom there were six in the palace of the King of Yoruba: they are also called Iwefa.

123.

Enu mi si.

My mouth opens (i.e., ***my appetite returns—est ouvert***).

124.

Mo gbon li owo mo gbon lesse temi tan.

My hands and feet are shaken (i.e., ***I am in extreme poverty***).

125.

Iyo Oyibo.

White man's salt (i.e., *refined sugar.*)

The following proverbs in the Yoruba language are from the vocabulary of the Rev. Samuel (now Bishop) Crowther.* That excellent divine has kindly assisted me with sundry explanations which do not appear in the latest edition of his book. Many of them will strike the reader "like the maxims in 'Poor Richard's Almanac,' which pass for deep wisdom with the vulgar of all nations."† Others are neatly expressed and ingenious in application. There are many also which even Mr. Crowther could not well explain, though on occasions they become exceedingly *à propos*. The people are at

* A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language. Compiled by the Rev. Samuel Crowther, Native Missionary of the Church Missionary Society. Seeleys, Fleet Street, London, 1852.

† China. Being the *Times'* Special Correspondent from China. By George Wingrove Cooke. G. Routledge & Co., London, 1858.

once noted for speaking in proverbs and are remarkably "touchy"—"thin skinned"—sensitive. Such a saying as "the monkey's grandmother was a fool" would raise a storm of wrath if addressed by one Yoruba man to another.

1.

Abanigbele ma mo oju enni.

An inmate which cannot be tamed, *i.e.*, fire.

2.

Ohun abapade ko jo ohun ti ari telle.

An accident is not like an expected result.

3.

Aso funfun on abawon ki ire.

A white cloth and a stain never agree.

N.B.—Said when a drunken man, for instance, is brought, or intrudes himself, into the society of the sober.

4.

Bi oran ba su okunkun abe e wo li abbe.

If the matter be dark, dive to the bottom.

N.B.—Equivalent to our "Look before you leap.

5.

Ohun ti ako fe ki enia ki omo li ase li abbelle.

What is not wished to be known, is done in secrecy.

6.

Didi ni imu abe imu.

Wrapping up a razor preserves its sharpness.

N.B.—Meaning, that a clever man should conceal his talents.

7.

Enniti mbe abeiyannu yio ri ohun ti nfe gba lowo oluware.

He who begs with importunity will get what he wants.

8.

Abiamo abehin jija.

A mother with a kicker (i.e., *a struggling child*) on her back. A playful expression used in addressing a woman with an infant.

9.

Aso abila gbogbo li o li oruko.

Each coloured cloth has its name.

N.B.—Meaning, that everything has its meaning and its use.

10.

Enniti ko fe oran enni ni ise abinokuenni.

He who does not love his neighbour acts maliciously.

11.

Bi aso kpe̱li abo a hu.

If clothes remain long in the bag they rot.

N.B.—So the Arabs say, "Standing water stinks," in opposition to our "Rolling stone gathers no moss." It is also applied to the miserly, who waste their wealth by hoarding it.

12.

Enniti o ba mo idi oran telle on ni ibu abuja eke.

He who knows a matter beforehand confounds the liar.

13.

Bi aba bu igbe li abuka ari eranko ino re pa.

If a bush is surrounded the animals in it are easily killed.

N.B.—Meaning, that everything may be accomplished by the force of numbers.

14.

A ki isipe inaro fu abuke.

A hunchback is never asked to stand upright.

N.B.—We are not to order impossibilities.

15.

Aburo ki ipa egbon ni itan.

The young cannot teach tradition to the old.

16.

Adaba kekeluke ko si oja ti ko na tan.

There is no market in which the dove with the prominent breast has not traded.

N.B.—The cowrie, on account of its circulation as currency, is compared with the dove.

17.

Ki adaba-susu ki owi fu jodiedie, ki eiye ki owi fu eiye.

Let the white pigeon tell the woodpecker, and bird tell bird.

N.B.—It means, let the matter be spread abroad; also that friends must support one another.

18.

Bi opo enia ba kuro li egbe ofo adanilaraya ni ifo ni jojo.

Though many guests are absent, he only who enlivens the party is missed.

N.B.—Said in company.

19.

Adaniloju ko se ifi ehin ti.

He who disappoints another is unworthy to be trusted.

20.

Adaniloro fi agbara ko ni.

He who torments another (*only*) teaches him to strengthen himself.

21.

Adape oro ki ije ki amo itumo oruko.

Contraction of words conceals the sense.

N.B.—Opposed to our "Brevity is the soul of wit."

22.

Aji bo wa iba li aba ila li atellewo, awa ko mo enni ti o ko o, aji bo wa iba li owo adasan, awa ko mo enni ti o je e.

We wake and find (i.e., *we find as soon as we have consciousness*) marks on the palms of our hand; we do not know who made the marks: we wake and find an old debt, and we know not who incurred it.

N.B.—Shows how easily man "runs into debt."

23.

Obba ko ni filla ade li oni.

The Obba (*or king*) has no cap, but a crown.

N.B.—The "Filla" is the "Kantop" of India, a cap with the flaps for the ears. The "Ade" is a kind of crown studded with beads. The proverb means, that a king must not use common things.

24.

Adebipani ki ise ore enni.

He who causes one's starvation is not one's friend.

25.

Adiredo, ko se ibo Ipori.

A waterfowl is not fit to worship the tutelary god Ipori.

N.B.—Ipori (i.e., *Ikpo ori*) is the big toe worshipped by the Yorubas. The saying touches the fitness of things.

26.

Adire-iranna ni isaju oku.

The fowl is the forerunner of the dead.

N.B.—The Adire-iranna is a fowl beheaded at the death of a person, and the blood is sprinkled over the corpse, as its passport to the invisible world. This saying is constantly used at funerals.

27.

Enni ti o pa afe-imojo, ki omu re Oyo, eda li ara oko ije.

Whoever kills an Afe-imojo must bear it to Oyo (*the capital of Yoruba*); the Eda only is due to the people of the province to eat.

N.B.—The Afe-imojo is an animal of the rat kind, whose tail—a royalty—is used by the King of Yoruba, in sign of distinction: he generally holds it before his mouth when he walks abroad, a custom followed by his subjects with meaner articles. The Eda is a common rat, which breeds very fast.

28.

Afeno ni ti iyangbo.

Chaff is to be fanned away.

N.B.—This is a superstitious saying, a curse acting as a charm: "As the chaff is blown away, so may your evil intentions against me be dispersed."

29.

Afinosajere afehin se ikoko.

The faithless man (*receives your words*) in a perforated vessel, but keeps behind his back the vessel (*which would retain them*), or turns his back instead of his face.

30.

Ohun ti afoju fi oju re ri ki oto fo, an li ori mo, ko ton omiran ri mo.

What the blind saw before he was blind, is the last sight he ever shall see.

N.B.—This would be said, for instance, of a fallen usurper.

31.

Agadagodo ko mo ino ara won.

One lock does not know the wards of another.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a reserved man whose secrets are not known.

32.

Agbada ya li oron o baje.

An Agbada torn at the neck is spoiled.

N.B.—The Agbada is a kind of loose garment. The proverb means, that a slip or a blunder ruins action.

33.

Igba dodo li agbado igbani.

Indian corn is the true support of a people.

34.

Agbari ko ni modunmodun.

A mere skull has no brains (*moisture*) in it. (This would be said of a morose, an unfriendly, or a miserly man.)

35.

Agbassa babba okuta.

A boulder is the father of rocks.

N.B.—This is the first sample of many similar sayings that will occur. It is said by way of compliment, praise, or flattery either to, or of, a "superior person."

36.

Agbatan li agba olle.

You must help an idle man thoroughly (*if you help him at all*).

37.

Agbe ni ije egbin omi, agbalagba ni ijiya oran.

As a calabash receives the sediment of water, so an elder must exercise forbearance.

38.

Bi apon omi bi o dano, bi agbe ko ba fo aton omiran pon.

When one is carrying water and happens to spill it, if the calabash be not broken, you can get more.

39.

Agbe ni ida aro, Aluko ni ikosun, Lekeleke li allala funfun.

The Agbe is the dyer in blue (i.e., *has blue feathers*); the Aluko is the painter of red dye (i.e., *has red*), but the Lekeleke is the owner of the white cloth (i.e., *is white*).

N.B.—The Agbe and the Aluko are different species of jays; the Lekeleke is the crane, called in India a paddy-bird.

40.

Iwo ba agbebo adire li oja iwo ntagere si i ira, iba se rere oluwa re ko je ta a.

You met a hen in the market, and hastened to purchase her; had she been worth keeping the owner would not have sold her.

N.B.—Often said, and justly said, of those who purchase adult slaves.

41.

Agbeje ko koro ni ille nla.

The squash is never bitter in a large family.

N.B.—Agbeje is an early pumpkin, much eaten before other vegetables are in season.* The proverb means, that in an extensive household there should be no wastefulness.

42.

Agbo meji ko mo omi akoto kan.

Two rams cannot drink out of the same calabash.

N.B—There cannot be two suns in the same sphere.

* See Mr. Bowen's Collection, No. 83.

43.

Koro agbo ni imu agbo niyin, olla ti babba ni imu ommoiyan.

A ram's mane gives him a noble appearance; a father's honour makes a son proud.

44.

Agbon ko se ije fun eiye ki eiye.

Agbon (*the cocoa tree, and its nut*) is not good for a bird to eat.

N.B.—Said of or to one who undertakes something beyond his powers. So Æsop's fable of the frog and the bull.

45.

Mo mo o tan ko je agbon ki o li oro.

Self-conceit deprives the wasp of honey.

46.

Bi o boju bi o bonu isalle agbon li a ipari re si.

When the face is washed, you finish at the chin.

N.B.—This is a proverbial saying when a dispute is ended. "It is all settled, and the child's name is Anthony."

47.

Aki ifa eran ikon gbon eran agbon yin no.

No one will throw away venison for squirrel's flesh.

48.

Enniti npe' o ko sunkonu, iwo li ogbo agboya.

He is going on calling you, and you pretend to be deaf.

N.B.—Meaning that a wilful man will have his way.

49.

Agidi ti on ti iyonnu, akurete ti on ti iya.

An implacable person is always a source of trouble, a pliable person is sure to suffer.

50.

Agiliti abi ara yiyi.

The Agiliti (*or iguana*) with a rough skin.

N.B.—Applied to those with cutaneous disorders.

51.

Akisa aso li afi isu osuka: Illu kan mbe nwon ama pe illu na ni illu alagisa.

"Rags make up a pad:" there is a town called "Rag-Town."

N.B.—This is one of many explanatory and memorial sayings—it simply illustrates the meaning of the words Illu alagisa.

52.

Agoro ti o gbon sa a ebiti pa a ambotori malaju.

The Ago is caught in a trap: how much more the Malaju?

N.B.—The Ago is a striped rat remarkable for its craft, and care of its young. The Malaju is a kind of water rat noted for stupidity.

53.

Eiyelle ko li agogo kiki arupe.

There is no tallness among pigeons: they are all dwarfs.

N.B.—Meaning that where there is no head, all are masters: said when there is too much of *égalité* in a society.

54.

Aja ti ire re ba daniloju li ade si agoro.

The dog which is known to be very swift is set to catch the hare.

N.B.—This is said of a confident man.

55.

Bi ako ba le itete kolle ago li apa na.

If one is not able at once to build a house, a shed is first erected.

56.

Ago won de ara ihin.

An Ago (*suffers his dependents to be slothful*), till some one shall come (*who shall awaken them*).

N.B.—The Ago is the opposite of our "martinet." The saying means that if one king be over-indulgent to his subjects, his successor will change the aspect of affairs. Our King Log and King Stork.

57.

Aguala mba osu irin nwon sebi aja re ni ise: Aguala ki ise aja osupa.

Venus (*the planet*) travels with the moon; they suppose it to be her dog: Venus is not the moon's dog.

N.B.—This is a saying difficult to illustrate. It might be applied to two men who travel together independently, whilst one is taken to be the servant of the other. Aguala, or the planet Venus, is called in Yoruba the "moon's dog." The Oji tribes call her Kekye, or Kekyepevarre, *i.e.*, Kekye who desires to marry. The negroes say it is betrothed to the moon; the Hindus believe the nymphæa lotus to be enamoured of the "lesser light," and constantly pursuing but never able to catch the object of its desires.

58.

Ahere ni yio kehin oko, atta ni yio kehin ille.

The farmhouse remains to the last (*upon the ground*), and the ridge of the roof completes the building.

N.B.—This proverb means that a man will be compelled to seek a shelter at last.

59.

Ahon ni ipinle ennu.

The tongue is the end of the mouth.

N.B.—A compliment like No. 35.

60.

Aigboran babba afojudi.

Disobedience is the father of insolence.

61.

Bi ako li aiya rindo rindo, aki ije ayan.

If the stomach be not strong, do not eat cockroaches.

62.

Aiye li Okun, enia li Ossa, aki imo eive ki ako aiye ja.

The world is (*or may be compared to*) **an ocean: mankind is the Ossa Lagoon** (*between Lagos and Badagry*): however well a person swims, he cannot cross the world.

N.B.—It is presumptuous for a man to attempt all things—Non omnia possumus omnes.

63.

Aja egberun ko gbo oruko.

A dog valued at half-a-crown cannot be taught.

N.B.—Meaning an old dog; half-a-crown being the price of a full-grown animal.

64.

Okipa aja li afi ibo Ogun.

An old dog must be sacrificed to Ogun.

N.B.—Meaning that Ogun claims the best.

65.

Aja ti ko leti ko se idegbe.

A stupid dog will not do for the chase.

66.

Ajabo ni ti Iwe, bi Iwe ja abo lowo oloko.

The Iwe (*or little edible frog, also used in charms and philtres*) is sure to slip from the farmer's hands.

N.B.—A superstitious saying of a good omen. "If I am made prisoner in battle (or *e. g.*, when thieving), I am sure to escape."

67.

Ajadi agbon odi olara.

A basket with its bottom burst is useless.

N.B.—Equivalent to our "ne'er do weel."

68.

Ajagajigi enniti o mi kukute mi 'ra re.

He who tries to shake the trunk of a tree, only shakes himself.

69.

Pansa ille o li ariwo nino ajaille ba agba li eru.

When a grave is made, there is a great deal of noise (*from the labourers who loathe the task*); and the sight of a vault makes old men tremble.

N.B.—Ajaille is the roof of a grave, or a pit-fall with thorns, to trap thieves, like the "Ogi" of India.

70.

Ogbogbo awon ni bi Ajako.

He who kills an Ajako (*a dog-like animal*) is sure to suffer for it.

N.B.—A popular superstition.

71.

Ogun ja agbara otte sono.

The enemy pulls down the fortifications.

N.B.—Vae victis!

72.

Oku ajannaku li ayo ogbo si, ta li oje yo oju agada si eran, alabo owo.

It is easy to cut to pieces a dead elephant; but no one dares attack a live one.

73.

Ko se eku ko se eiye ajao.

The bat * is neither rat nor bird.

N.B.—Meaning that a person is neither one thing nor the other.

74.

Ki Ajinde olla ki oje.

May a future resurrection answer (*my hopes*)!

N.B.—Evidently borrowed from El Islam.

75.

Bi ille ko kan ille ki ijo ajoran.

Houses not contiguous do not easily catch fire.

N.B.—Meaning that if we are not over familiar we shall not quarrel.

* This appears to be the meaning of "Ajao."

76.

Ennu li akparo ifi ipe ora, ani kiki ora, kiki ora.

With the mouth the Akparo (*partridge*) proclaims its fat, crying "Nothing but fat (*kika ora*)! nothing but fat!"

N.B.—Said of a person that praises himself.

77.

Iwo li ojuti bi aka.

You are bashful like the armadillo.

N.B.—A common saying.

78.

Bi oku ba ku laiye akala amo li orun.

The vulture scents the carcase, however high in the air he may be.

N.B.—Said of a "Paul Pry."

79.

Ko gbino eru, ko ra edo ommo.

He is not angry on account of slaves, nor peevish on account of children.

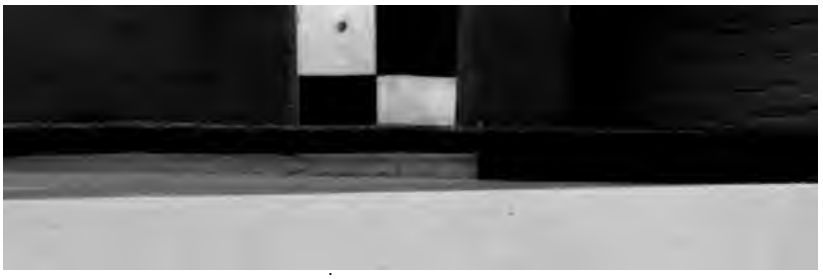
N.B.—Said (and pointedly too) of one who has the patience of Job.

80.

Bi o ba gbo ogun mi, ki iduro din akaraku.

Whenever he hears of my war, he never waits to make provision.

N.B.—Said of the malignant, who rejoices at another's trouble.



81.

Akasu babba ekko.

Akashu is the father of other loaves.

N.B.—"Akashu" is a large lump of the native bread, called Agidi at Sierra Leone, and in Yoruba, Ekko.* The saying means that he laughs at scars who never felt a wound.

82.

Akatanpo ko to ija ija, ta li o mu iggi wa iko loju?

A cross bow is not enough to go to war with (*since the introduction of fire-arms*): whom do you dare to face with a stick?

N.B.—The Akatapo, or Akatanpo, is the cross-bow, probably introduced by the early Portuguese, now obsolete in these regions, but still used amongst the Mpangwe or Fans of the Gaboon river, and other tribes lying to the south of them. The saying is applied contemptuously to a weak opponent.

83.

Alakatanpo fi oju woke.

A cross-bowman is obliged to look upwards.

N.B.—Meaning that to effect certain purposes certain steps must be taken.

84.

Akede ko jiyan gbigbona.

The Akede (*or public crier*) does not eat warm food.

N.B.—He is liable to be called away at any moment from his meat. This is said of men of business.

* Mr. Bowen's collection, No. 88.

85.

Akeke ojogan fi id ija ara, ille fi oju di ni, akeke ko se idi ni ibo.

A scorpion stings with his tail; a domestic is apt to be insolent; one cannot hide a scorpion in the hand.

N.B.—Said of slaves who do not fear their master.

86.

Akete kekere ko gba enia meji.

A small bed will not hold two persons.

87.

Aki iti ehin akisalle iwure.

One cannot bless the gods without using the word "Akishalle."

N.B.—Akishalle is a running plant with a pealike pod. This is a peculiar saying. The syllable "sha" (*as in ori-sha*) often enters into the names of the gods, and thus the meaning would be, we can do nothing without aid.

88.

Akisa ba enni rere je.

Rags disgrace a handsome person.

N.B.—"Fine feathers make fine fowls;" or "God makes and apparel shapes."

89.

Iwo iba ri, iwo ko gboddo wi; ni ipa akoni.

You may see but not dare to speak (*of the danger*): it is that which is the death of the strong man.

N.B.—Meaning that the strong man often perishes for want of warning.

90.

Akonrin ko li elegbe.

The singer has no one to take part in the chorus with him.

N.B.—Said when there is but one "base exception;" when no one shares your sentiments.

91.

Akudin Asapa ko konno ake.

The heart of the Ashakpa tree fears no axe.

N.B.—The Ashakpa is a hard-wood tree used for roofs and joists, posts and rafters. The wood makes good charcoal, and the leaves cure the small-pox. The proverb is applied to a "heart of oak,"—a strong and brave man.

92.

Aladugbo ki ida olla.

A near neighbour need not take (*a final*) leave till to-morrow.

93.

Alafia babba ore.

Peace is the father of friendship.

N.B.—"Alafia" is an Arabic noun and article الْعَافِيَة: in Yoruba it means "peace" or "health," and is a common salutation.

94.

Alagbe ko ku li Oyo.

A beggar never dies of want in Ozo (*the capital*).

N.B.—(*The same cannot be said of London*)—The beggar says the above proverbially, wherever he may be, "Some charitable man will surely feed me."

95.

Alajapa ko li eran li aiya.

A petty trader has no flesh upon her bosom.

N.B.—Meaning that the Alajapa-woman, who buys at one town and sells for some small profit at another, wears herself to a skeleton. Thus the proverb somewhat resembles our "Care killed a cat."

96.

Alakatɜnpo oju ko le ita eran pa.

He who has only his eyebrow for a cross-bow can never kill an animal.

97.

Papa li assa awonso bi alakele.

A noisy weaver, who imitates his master weaver (i. e., *the one who cuts off the lengths of cloth*).

N.B.—"Papa" expresses the sound of the sley. The saying is addressed complimentarily to a weaver.

98.

Alari babba aso.

Alari is the prince of decorations.

N.B.—Alari (*which also means scarlet*) here alludes to a kind of red cotton grown in Hausa. The saying is complimentary, like Nos. 35 and 59.

99.

Alla funfun otta Orisa.

A white cloth is an object of hatred to the gods.

N.B.– Because it is worn out in their service. The saying is ironical, "A willing horse is worked to death."

100.

Egbon iwaju alugbon babba.

An elder brother is a resemblance to a father.

N.B.—The "scorpion" is not known to this stage of civilisation.

101.

Alukembu babba assa.

The stirrup is the father of the saddle.

N.B.—Complimentary.

102.

Bi ina jo abowo fun aluki.

When fire burns up the bush, it respects the Aluki plant.

N.B.—The Aluki is a slender prickly plant.

103.

Amodun ko riri, je ki amura ki asise.

The coming year is not out of sight; let us be up and work.

N.B.—These people have not yet been forbidden to take any thought for the morrow. The saying is addressed to the indolent and the dilatory.

104.

Amokun ni eru on wo, ki ise lori, ni ille li o ti wo lo.

A lame man said his load was not upright, and was answered, "Its unevenness began from the ground (i. e., *from your lame foot*)."

N.B.—Meaning that bad workmen complain of their tools; and addressed to the sluggard and the spendthrift.

105.

Amgbadu obbe onse.

The Amgbadu is the sauce of messengers.

N.B.—The Amgbadu is the "Crane-crane" of Sierra Leone: messengers, who are many in number, are usually entertained with a sauce made of this cheap and common vegetable. The saying might be used by one about to give a large "dinner-party."

106.

Antete o da yanpan yanpan sille.

The Antete cricket causes a stir and confusion.

N.B.—Said of a backbiter who bites and backs out.

107.

Bi ommo da ori kan apa, apa a: bi o si da ori kan iroko, iroko ako o li onna.

If a child treats the Apa tree insolently, it wounds his head; if he treats the Iroko tree civilly, it welcomes him.

N.B.—The Apa is popularly called African mahogany (*Oldfieldia Africana*); it is used for drums, and is believed to become luminous at night. The Iroko is a tree used for building, and thus becomes an emblem of refuge, whilst the Apa is that of vengeance. The proverb contains a play upon words, and means also "do not be insolent."

108.

Apadi li o to iko ina loju.

Nothing but a potsherd can face fire.

N.B.—A calabash cannot. The meaning would be, it is only a tough man that can weather this storm.

109.

Apani ki ije ki amu ida lo ni ipako on.

The executioner never lets the sword be passed across his own neck.

110.

Apari fojudi abbe.

A bald-headed man does not care for a razor.

111.

Apata ri iku kehin si, apata ni igba ni li ogun.

When a shield sees death, it (*does not fly from it, but*) turns its outside (*lit. back*) to meet it: a shield is a protection in the front of battle.

N.B.—Meaning that a shield is useful in war; also as the Persians say, "the left arm is brave," because raised to defend the head from a sabre cut.

112.

Apejure li agbedde iro *or* **Apejure li onna ise.**

The smith (*or artisan*) always follows a pattern.

N.B.—We must learn of others.

113.

Ma fi ti re ko mi li oron li oda fu apena on owu.

(*The pin says to the cotton*), "Do not hang your trouble on my neck." This is always the dispute between the cotton and the pin.

N.B.—Apena is the pin upon which spun cotton is wound for sale. The saying would be applied to one who, like the "fox that lost his tail," wants to involve others in his own troubles.

114.

Die die li amo apere.

By degrees one understands a sign (*or pattern*).

N.B.—Meaning that in all things study is necessary; there is wisdom in roasting eggs.

115.

Ijaje ema ko di ennu apo.

A rascal never closes the mouth of his bag.

N.B.—A spendthrift cannot cease from spending.

116.

Ibaje apo ni ibaje apa, bi apa ba ja, apo aballe.

The injury of a bag is caused by the injury of the pack-rope; if the pack-rope breaks, the bag will go down.

N.B.—Warning men not to rest on things insecure. There is also a play upon the words "apo" and "apa."

117.

Araba nla ommo agberu gbake.

A large Araba receives (*into its substance*) the heft and axe together.

N. B.—The Araba is the bombax, or cotton-tree; and the saying means that the greater power overwhelms the less,—the weakest goes to the wall.

118.

O bo lowo Agballe, o kun Arabi.

When the Agballe is overpowered, there remains only the power of the Arabi (*to be subdued*).

N.B.—The Agballe and the Arabi are two insects always found together. The saying is our Divide et impera.

119.

Araiye abi oju-pete.

Mankind presents a circumscribed countenance (i. e., *appearance*).

N.B.—Meaning that the nature of things human is limited.

120.

Aran ni ipari oso.

Velvet gives a finish to dress.

N.B.—Used peculiarly: when a matter is decided, the proverb would be quoted comparing the peace-maker to velvet.

121.

Enniti o fe arewa o fe iyonnu.

He who marries a beauty marries trouble.

N.B.—So the Spaniards say, a handsome wife brings no fortune.

122.

Denge tutu lehin ino re gbona bi arifi.

Though the pap is cold on the back (i. e., *surface*), yet the inside is very hot.

N.B.—Still waters run deep.

123.

Aro ni idena Orisa.

The Aro (*man with withered limb*) is the porter at the gate (i. e., *stationary servant*) to the gods.

N.B.—Mr. Crowther quotes Milton's Sonnet on his blindness :—

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

124.

Ljo ba o bi oran ikunle ba aro.

The matter is to you what the task of kneeling is to one of withered limbs.

125.

Aro ki iru eru ki o ma so.

The Aro does not always bear its load: it will be put down (*sooner or later*).

N.B.—"Aro" is a native hearth, three clods or stones supporting the pot over the fire. The saying is consolatory, "Things at the worst will surely mend."

126.

Asinwin Ika, asiwere Iluka, nwon darijo nwon li awon nsore.

A fool of Ika (*town*) and an idiot of Iluka (*town*) meet together to make friendship with each other.

N.B.—So the French proverb, "Ceux qui se ressemblent s'assemblent."

127.

Aso babba ija.

Wrangling is the father of fighting.

123.

Asa gbe mi li adire ko duro nitori ti o, mo ohun ti o se.

The hawk having caught my chicken will not stay, because it knows it has done (*wrong*).

N.B.—So we say, "Le crime est quelquefois en sûreté, jamais il n'est tranquille."

129.

Asawi eje ennikan se are.

Words selected in a dispute (i. e., *a one-sided statement of the case*) always appear right.

N.B.—Confirmed by the dictum of a certain Welsh magistrate.

130.

Asaya ki ije ki ommo oya ki o gbon.

(*The dog*) playing with the young (*and inexperienced*) hedgehog, does not suffer it to be wise (i. e., *throws it off its guard*).

N.B.—Said when an unwary man is deceived by rogues.

131.

Oju oloju ko jo iju enni, asehindeni ko wopo.

Another's eye is not (*faithful*) like one's own: agents are not numerous.

N.B.—So said Mr. Elwes of servants.

132.

Asisori ko ni ikun bi agba, otosi ko lowo bi oloro.

A pistol has not a bore like a cannon: a poor man has not money (*at his command*) like the rich.

N.B.—So we advise men to cut their coats according to their cloth.

133.

Enniti o nsape fun asiwere jo on asiwere, okan.

He who claps his hands for the fool to dance, is no better than the fool.

134.

Asiwere li o bi iya obbo.

The monkey's grandmother was a fool.

N.B.—This would be an insufferable insult to a Yoruba man.

135.

Asorin babba iggi.

The Asorin is the father of trees.

N.B.—"The Asorin," says Mr. Bowen, "is a tree to which the natives ascribe the properties of the upas. Mr. Crowther remarks that it is "a very large tree. There is a superstition that as soon as any one begins to cut the Asorin, he is chased by the spirit that dwells in it. The woodman accordingly drops palm oil on the ground, that the spirit may lick it up whilst he makes his escape. This tree is worshipped at a distance." The saying above quoted is merely superstitious.

136.

Asorin ko da osusu.

Asorin trees never form a grove.

137.

Asorin olodo.

The Asorin tree commands the brook.

138.

Aso lowo ko lekanna, enia ko si ni iballe.

Cloth has hands (i. e., *length, the measure used being hands or palms*) but no fingers: so a man (*has hands*) but no flowing train (*like the cloth*).

N.B.—This is said of one that covets his neighbour's goods.

139.

Ko ka iku ataba-susu ti ije larin asa.

Fearless of death, the pigeon feeds among the hawks.

N.B.—Said of a reckless man.

140.

Ni ijo ti ina ba jo ataba-susu ni ilo larin igbe, bi ina ba palo, elebu ama ire ebu.

When the bush is on fire, the pigeon removes from the grass-field: when the flame is extinguished, every one returns to his home.

N.B.—Said when, after a quarrel or an altercation, the contending parties part.

141.

Atampako ko se ijure okankan.

The thumb cannot point straight forwards.

N.B.—This is neat and expressive: it is said when quibbling or unfairness is detected. So we say, "Speak the truth and shame the devil."

142.

Agbasi mu atan gele.

Continual sweepings make a high rubbish-heap.

143.

Ate peiye mu eiye ku.

Bird-lime is the death of a bird.

N.B.—Said of those who court danger or destruction.

144.

Atellesse ni ije egbin onna.

The sole of the foot is exposed to all the dirt of the road.

N.B.—Said of a leader, who is expected to put up with all manner of troubles.

145.

Atellewo ki itan' ni je.

The palm of the hand never deceives one.

N.B.—Our proverb is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

146.

Oro atojomojo ko le isini li eti bi oro titton.

An old story does not open the ear as a new one does.

N.B.—We also have household words touching a twice-told tale.

147.

Ki Olorun ki o fu ni li atubotan rere.

May God give us a happy end!

N.B.—This is an expression manifestly borrowed from El Islam.

148.

Awiye ni Ife ifo gbangba li oro iperan.

(*As*) the Ife people (*the forefathers of the Yorubas*) speak without disguise, (*so*) a poisoned arrow kills an animal in the sight of all.

N.B.—Warns a prevaricator to speak the truth.

149.

Bi amba mbu Ettu ori ama ra Awo.

If you abuse the Ettu you make the Awo's head ache.

N.B.—The Ettu and Awo are varieties of Guinea fowl. The proverb means, that people feel acutely any reproach cast upon their relatives.

150.

Awodi nra ino aladire baje.*

When the hawk hovers (*over the yard*), the owner of the fowls feels uneasy.

N.B.—So Horace, "Nam tua res agitur murus quum proximus ardet."

* "Awodi" is a hawk, in Yoruba: the Somal call an eagle "Abodi."

151.

Li oju awodi ki ako adire re apatta.

No one would expose fowls on the top of a rock in the sight of a hawk.

N.B.—A warning to the imprudent.

152.

Awodi oloju ina.

The Awodi has eyes that can bear the fire.

153.

Mo kon igba lalle, mo kon igba li oro, mo kon igba li ossan ki mto fi ayindayinda lu u.

(*Says the Awoko, or mocking-bird*) I sing 200 songs in the morning, 200 at noon, and 200 in the afternoon (*as my ordinary task*), besides many frolicsome notes (*for my own amusement*).

N.B.—This is elliptical. The mocking bird has been accused of speaking evil of the king. He replies, "I may have done so without knowing it: did not I sing hundreds of songs," &c.? The saying is that of a man who is charged with slandering his neighbour, and who cannot deny it.

154.

Bi aba gbe aworan, aki isa ima fi, owo re te nkan.

However well an image be made, it must stand upon something.

N.B.—There must be a reason for everything: there is no smoke without fire.

155.

Eje awon ko kon ni li owo.

The blood of the land-tortoise (*or terrapin*) is not a handful.

156.

Ille osono a ya yo ta ni je ya ille awon ki awon.

One may call at the house of the generous and be filled: who will call at the house of a miser and salute him?

N.B.– Awon means both a land-tortoise and a miser.

157.

Ille awon ko gba awon, odedde awon ko gba olojo, awon ko ille oyo odde ʟi ibadi.

The house of the land-tortoise is not large enough for itself; the verandah (i. e., *the carapace overlapping the tail*) will not accommodate a guest.

N.B.—The tortoise having built its house, makes the verandah behind it.

158.

Aya be sille o be si sille.

When a monkey jumps down from the tree, he jumps into the house (*of his pursuer*).

N.B.—Meaning, that he is sure to be caught. The proverb is applied to those who incur danger without reason.

159.

Ayan ko gba edon.

The Ayan-tree resists an axe.

N.B.—The Ayan is the tree of whose wood is made the club of Shango, god of thunder and lightning; and the saying means, "Do not undertake an unnecessary action."

160.

Ayo ki ije ki aye e.

When the Ayo-game is won, it cannot be disputed.

N.B.—Ayo is the game called in Sierra Leone "Warry": it is played with counters and a board with cups. The proverb is our "Fair play is a jewel."

161.

Ayun ni mo ri nko ri abo.

I saw the departure, but not the return.

162.

Kun yun kun' wa bi iko era.

To be busy here and there, like the messenger of the ant.

N.B.—So the Hindus say, "Dhobi ka kutta, na ghar ka, na ghat ka"—a washerman's dog, neither in the house nor at the ghaut (*where linen is washed*). The proverb is applied to a "busy-body."

163.

Baba bo, baba molle.

A great matter puts a smaller out of sight.

164.

Agba ko si illu baje, balle ku ille di ahoro.

When there are no elders, the town is ruined; when the master dies, the house is desolate.

165.

Gangan ko ni saworo.

The Gangan (*war drum*) is destitute of bells (i. e., *ornaments*).

N.B.—Said sneeringly of the indolent, untidy, and badly dressed.

166.

Batta li a ifi ise agbura li arin egun.

With shoes one can get on in the midst of thorns.

N.B.—When confident in yourself you may confront difficulties.

167.

Bebbe ki o ri okose, sagbe ki ori awon.

Beg for help, and you will meet with rebuff: ask for alms, and you will meet with misers.

168.

Aki ida owo le ohun ti ako le igbe.

A thing which cannot be lifted (i. e., *accomplished*) should never be undertaken.

169.

Gudugudu kan li egbo kanrinkanrin.

The Gudugudu (*a poisonous wild yam*) is very acid at the root.

N.B.—Said of a difficult matter, a thing best left alone. So our common injunction, not to stir it, for fear of graveolent consequences.

170.

Obba ni igba owo bode.

It is the king who receives custom.

N.B.—Said to those who meddle with politics.

171.

Hohu! Iho ti ohu li esin akun u.

Eh! The grass field which grew up last year is burnt up.

N.B.—A play on the words Hohu (*expressing surprise*) and Iho (*a grass field burned every year by huntsmen*), which Mr. Crowther pronounces untranslateable. He thus, however, explained it to me. One man says, "Give me your reasons for this or that." The other answers by the proverb, meaning, "What is the use of your exclamation? If I had a thousand reasons I would not give you one —the matter is settled!"

172.

Ijo kan ojo o bori oda.

One day's rain makes up for many days' drought.

N.B.—A saying of many applications: in a good sense, of a generous man; or *vice versâ*, of severity after over-lenity; also inculcating earnestness of action—"Age quod agis."

173.

Otta enia ni iba oruko re je.

He is an enemy who slanders one's name.

N.B.—"Who steals my purse steals trash," &c. &c.

174.

Oro botiboti ko ye fun agbalagba.

Much talking is unbecoming in an elder.

175.

Bolla fun agba: awon ni babba enni.

Respect the elders: they are our fathers.

N.B.—We may remark, that whereas the Proverbs of Solomon dwell earnestly upon the respect and obedience due from children to their parents, the Yorubans are more careful to inculcate reverence for their elders. This is intimately connected with their system of politics.

176.

Om mode ki iwo sɔso ni bujoko agba.

The younger should not intrude into the seat of the elders.

177.

Ati iran di iran babba wa ko bo iru orisa wonyi ri.

From one generation of our fathers to another, we never worshipped such a god as this.

N.B.—Said when a strange god is proposed. The Hindu saying is, "The Adam of this place is a strange being."

178.

Kokoro di labalaba.

The grub becomes a butterfly.

N.B.—Said sneeringly of a *parvenu*.

179.

Egbo ke, ina ke, ohun enia ke.

The sore is spreading; the fire is glowing; the throat is hoarse.

N.B.—There is here more of sound than sense, "ke" (*to grow worse*) being repeated in three several significations.

180.

O daju danu, o ko mo essan messan.

(*Though*) you (*seem*) very clever, you cannot tell 9 times 9.

N.B.—The Yorubas, from their practice of counting cowries, are generally good accountants.

181.

Dasa mu abbe ni iyin, enni nla li opon iye.

(*Though*) a small covered dish gives the stew a neat appearance, a bowl answers best for great men.

N.B.—Because it is larger.

182.

Dobballe ki apa igbonwo mo o ni 'hun ti ise fun ni.

To prostrate oneself and keep the elbows close, does something for one.

N.B.—Meaning, "bóoing" is sure to benefit a man; also inculcating modesty, that he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

183.

Ma se gba dulumo enni kan.

Do not receive a slander against any one to accuse him falsely.

N.B.—Meaning, do not slander any one. The saying is popular as a moral command.

184.

Enniti ase li ore ti ko dupe aba se e ni ibi ko don o.

He to whom kindness is shown and does not return thanks, if evil is done to him he will not feel that either.

N.B.—Meaning, that he is devoid of feeling.

185.

Ebi ko je ki apa owo mo, ebi mu ino se papala.

Hunger does not allow saving of money: hunger makes the body lean.

186.

Ore Agbe se li Offa odi egbe.

The good which Agbe did in Offa town is wasted.

N.B.—Agbe was a well-known Yoruban philanthropist: his good deeds were wasted, because the Offa people did not appreciate them. The proverb is applied to one unappreciated—undeveloped greatness.

187.

Egbon so mo ayinrin li ennu ani ki adire ki o wa iyan a je, adire mo pe ontikara on onje ayinrin.

A tick having fastened itself on the mouth of a fox, a fowl was desired to remove it; but the fowl well knew that she was food for the fox, as well as the tick (*was food*) for her.

188.

Ehoro ni ti Oloffa li o soro.

The Ehoro said, "I care for nobody but the archer."

N.B.—The Ehoro is a hare, or rabbit, whose fur is used by the Yorubas as a charm against fire. This saying is used to defy rivals or enemies.

189.

Ejo ommo oniwere, bi o ti wu ki ase titi ako le iba ejo re, iggi ni gbogbo araiye iyo si i.

However much a snake may try, no one will be friendly to that child of writhing (i. e., *creeping thing*): on the contrary, all mankind will take up sticks to (*strike*) it.

N.B.—Said of a person or thing thoroughly "*antipatico*" to us. "I do not like you, Dr. Fell," &c.

190.

Eleke li eke iye, ohun ti aba se ni iye 'ni.

(*As*) anything which a man is (*in the habit of*) doing is natural to him, (*so*) a lie is natural to a liar.

N.B.—Habit is a second nature.

191.

Oruko ti aso ommo ni imo ommo li ara.

The name given to a child becomes natural to it.

192.

Agba metta ki isi ekulu ipe, bi okan pe ekulu, ekeji ani ekulu, eketta ani ekulu.

Three elders cannot all fail to pronounce (*the word*) Ékulu: one may say Ekúlu, another Ekulu, but the third will say Ékulu.

N.B.—The Ekulu is a species of deer, and the proverb means, "In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom."

193.

Alejo bi okete li a ifi ekuro ilo.

A stranger, like the ground-pig, is entertained with palm-nuts.

N.B.—Palm nuts are but poor fare.

194.

Ate yun ate wa li a ite ekuro oju onna.

To be trodden upon here, to be trodden upon there, is the fate of the palm-nut (*lying*) in the road.

195.

O fon mi li oron bi Ekuru.

He chokes me, like Ekuru.

N.B.—Ekuru, or Kuduru, is a very dry cake, made of the Ere or white bean. The above is said of a "bore."

196.

Erin ntu ekuru, efon ntu ekuru, titu ekuru ajannaku bo ti efon molle.

The elephant makes a dust, and the buffalo makes a dust, but the dust of the buffalo is lost in that of the elephant.

197.

Ekute ille ko fi ibi aja ji han 'ra won.

The house-rat does not show its companion the hole in the ceiling (*into which it may fall*).

N.B.—The rat has escaped the danger, and leaves his friend to find it out. *Chacun pour soi.*

198.

Ekute ille ko ri ennuba ologbo wijo.

The domestic rat has no voice (i. e., *power*) to call the cat to account.

199.

Elubo se ogbodo ri, eru se ommo ni ille babba re.

(*As*) the Elubo was once a soft unripe yam, (*so*) the slave was once a child in his father's house.

N.B.—Elubo is prepared yam made into flour.

200.

Emirin nje 'ni ko ti nja.

The (*sting of the*) sand-fly is not so sharp as poverty.

201.

Ki emo ki o mo ni Ibese, ki omase de Ijanna.

Let the wonder stop at Ibese, and not proceed to Ijanna.

N.B.—Ibese and Ijanna, now destroyed, were two frontier towns at which travellers entering the Yoruba country successively paid tribute. Mr. Crowther explains it by "let the matter proceed no further." It somewhat suggests—

"De par le Roi! défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu."

It would also be applied, for instance, by the Abeokutans to the English at Lagos, wishing to force new manners and customs upon them.

202.

Bi iwo ko li owo o li ena, bi iwo ko li ena o li ohun rere li ennu.

If you have no money (*to give to one in distress*), you may pay frequent visits; if you cannot visit, you may send good words of the mouth (i. e., *kind messages*).

203.

Enitere ejitere li oja ifi ikon.

One here, two there, (*so*) the market is filled up.

N.B.—"Many a little makes a muckle."

204.

Enitere ejitere opo womu.

One here, two there, (*so gathers*) a vast multitude.

205.

Bi ino ibi ajanaku abi Era.

If the elephant can be angry, so can the Era (*a small black wood ant*).

206.

Enniti ko le igbe era, ti o nkusa si erin, yio te ara re.

He who cannot raise an ant, and yet tries to raise an elephant, shall find out his folly.

N.B.—Straining at gnats and swallowing camels.

207.

Ero ko jewo imota tan, bi o ba bi i, ali o feri die.

The trader never confesses that he has sold all his goods; but when asked, he will (*only*) say, "Trade is a little better."

N.B.—So Proverbs xx. 14, "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer," &c.

208.

Enniti o da eru li eru ito.

Ashes fly back in the face of him that throws them.

N.B.—We say the same of curses.

209.

Owo li owo Ika, opo li opo Erun.

Order is the order of the Ika, multitude is the multitude of the Erun.

N.B.—Ikan is a white ant; Erun a general term for the ant tribe. The saying means, that the Ika works in ranks, whilst all others move in irregular swarms. This is said when disorder appears in an army, company, town, &c.

210.

Iyan ni imu, ni ije eso iggi ki iggi.

Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees.

N.B.—Trinculo says, "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows."

211.

Esinsin ko mo iku, jije ni ti re.

The fly heeds not death: eating is all to him.

212.

Esu ko ni iwa ako ille re si ita.

As the Rejected one has no (*kindliness of*) disposition, his house is made for him in the street (*by itself*).

N.B.—Esu (lit., *rejected*) is generally translated "devil," Satan.

213.

Ki esu ki o yin eiye, esu fo ni ijo kan soso iye re re.

The white ant may well admire the bird, for after flying one day it loses its wings.

N.B.—The termes assumes its perfect form about the beginning of the rains; after a few hours, however, it loses its wings, and falls an easy prey to man, birds, and reptiles.

214.

Ko si ohun ti o po to esu, bi o ba 'o ni ille a ba li oko.

There is nothing so numerous as the locusts: they meet you in the town and in the field.

N.B.—Somewhat like our "good folks are scarce;" but used in a deprecatory sense.

215.

Ete li egbon, ero li aburo, ogbon ino li o se eketta.

Consideration is the first born, calculation the next, wisdom the third.

N.B.—So we say, "Take heed will surely speed."

216.

Aimete aimero ni imu enia meffa isingba egbaffa.

Want of consideration and forethought made six brothers pawn themselves for six dollars.

217.

Eti, gbo ekeji ki o to dajo.

Ear, hear the other (*side of the question*) before you decide.

N.B.—The same as our Audi alteram partem.

218.

Ewure je o re ille, agutan je ore ille, aje iwa ille ba eledde je.

When the goat has fed, it returns home; when the sheep has fed, it returns home; not returning home after feeding ruins (*the character of*) the pig.

N.B.—This saying means, that a man should leave the room when it is preferred to his company.

219.

Ada ebo fun gunugun, o li on ko ru, ada ebo fun Akalla o li on ko ru, ada ebo fu eiyelle, o gbe ebo orubo.

Sacrifice was prescribed to the turkey-buzzard, but it refused to offer it; sacrifice was prescribed to the Akalla vulture, but it also refused: when sacrifices were prescribed to the pigeon, it offered them.

N.B.—This tradition explains to the Yoruba why the two former birds remained unclean, whilst the latter is domesticated, and used for sacrifice.

220.

Iwo ko ri akasu o npata si efo.

You have not yet obtained the loaf, and you began to prepare your stew.

221.

Didon li o don li a nba ore je efo ti ille enni to ni ije.

Because (*friendship*) is pleasant, we partake of our

friend's entertainment; not because we have not enough (*to eat*) in our own house.

N.B.—This saying is ever in the mouth of an Asiatic of the middle classes.

222.

Agbara to efon ma la iwo.

A man may be as strong as the buffalo, yet he has no horns.

223.

Egge ko so oki, enniti o bo si abbe re a pa a ku patapata.

The Egge-trap never fails, whatever comes under it is struck dead.

N.B.—Egge is the common African trap made with a bent tree.

224.

Enni egun gun ni ise lakalaka to alabbe.

He who is pierced with thorns must limp off to him who has a lancet.

225.

Asare nino egun ko se lassan, bi iwo ko le ejo, ejo li o nle 'o.

A man does not run among thorns for nothing; either he is chasing a snake or a snake is chasing him.

226.

Dagbasa dagbasa ti ipa apata eiyele.

He runs into debt who cuts up a pigeon to sell it in parts.

N.B.—He ruins himself who buys wholesale at a high price what he finds worthless in retail.

227.

Iku eja ni inu eja imo illu, eja Ogun iba se do Akesan.

It was the death of the fish that introduced it into the town; what else would have brought it from the Ogun River to the palace?

N.B.—Shows the effects of poverty, misfortune, and similar "judgments."

228.

Ohun gbogbo li adiyele, sugbon ko si enniti o mo iye ara ejje ara enni; ejje ko fi oju rere jade.

Every thing has its price; but who can set a price upon blood? Blood does not willingly leave the body.

N.B.—As the Asiatic proverb is, "Musk, love, and murder will out."

229.

Bi ekke otosi ko to oko li oro ato li alle.

If the poor man's rafter (i. e., *the plan proposed by a poor man for lengthening the rafter*) does not reach the top in the morning, it will reach it in the evening.

N.B.—A poor man is supposed to be looking on at the erection of a house, and recommends splicing two rafters together; his

advice is at first despised because he is poor, but is eventually adopted on the failure of all other plans. So Ecclesiastes ix. 16, "Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard."

230.

Akamo ekun o ni iyonnu.

It is difficult to encompass a leopard.

231.

Imado iba se bi eledde abilluje, eru iba jobba enia ko kun.

A wild boar, in place of a pig, would ravage the town; and a slave, made king, would spare nobody.

N.B.—Equivalent to our beggar on horseback. So Saadi somewhere says, "If a Derwaysh were to head the armies of El Islam, they would soon reach the ends of the world."

232.

Eleri ni iwajo, eleri ki ise elegbe.

A witness speaks the truth; a witness does not take (*the liar's*) part.

N.B.—Inculcates the virtue of truth in testimony, the people being "awful liars." Cf. Proverbs xiv. 5, "A faithful witness will not lie," &c.

233.

Ki Olorun ki ofu 'o li emmi gigun.

May the Lord of Heaven give you a long life!

N.B.—A popular form of blessing.

234.

Emmi abata ni imu odo isan.

The influence of a fountain makes the brook flow.

N.B.—Meaning, that by the aid of the great you may effect something great.

235.

Bi aba soro tan erin li a irin, bi aba yo tan orun 'ni ikon 'ni.

When a joke is uttered it creates laughter: when one has eaten to the full, he falls a-dozing.

N.B.—This is somewhat in "low-life," and cuts many ways: it would always apply when a man has had a "belly-full" of a thing.

236.

Aki ipe e li eru ki ape e li oso.

What is (*really*) a load should not be called an ornament.

N.B.—Inculcates earnestness—Age quod agis.

237.

Ereke ni ille erin.

The jaw is the house of laughter.

N.B.—The jaw is here compared with a happy family.

238.

Mo so awo etta mo idi, o ki yi ota mi.

I have tied the leopard skin round my waist: you cannot sell me.

N.B.—Meaning, I have the protection of powerful friends: you cannot ruin me with law expenses.

239.

Asonmo di ette, okere ni idon.

Familiarity breeds contempt: distance secures respect.

240.

Eya oibo ni Fulani.

The Fula are a tribe from over the sea (*or white men*).

N.B.—An ethnological adage connecting Fulas with Europeans.

241.

Eyin ni idi akuko.

The egg becomes a cock.

242.

Ako le ifa 'ri lehin olori.

You cannot shave a man's head in his absence.

N.B.—You cannot settle a matter unless those concerned in it are present.

243.

Okete ni ojo gbogbo li on mo, on ko mo ojo miran.

The Okete says, "I understand (*what you mean by*) a specified day, (*but*) another day I do not understand."

N.B.—The Okete is a large rat that eats palm-nuts, and is therefore dedicated to Ifa. The saying applies to an undecided man: it also implies a suspicion, "You should explain your intentions."

244.

Arin fa li oju akegan, ayan kasa li oju abu 'ni, abu 'ni ko li okowo ni ille.

A man walks at his ease in the presence of his abuser; a man steps proudly in the presence of his abuser; (*when he knows that*) the abuser has not twenty cowries in his house.

245.

Fadaka babba oje, wura babba ide.

Silver is the father of lead; gold is the father of brass.

N.B.—The alchemists invert these propositions. The Yoruba word for silver is Fadaka, evidently the Arabic fizzeh, which shows the metal not to have been indigenous. On the other hand, "Wura," gold, is a vernacular word. The saying means, that one thing is better than another.

246.

Bi nwon ko ba fe o ni iso nwon fati si apakan.

If they do not want you in their company, go aside.

N.B.—The Yorubas are naturally intrusive, and are not to be expelled a room by hints; these truisms of advice are therefore necessary for them.

247.

Ipon ri iku o feribo o.

The spoon seeing death, ventures its head into it (i. e., *is not afraid of scalding water*).

N.B.—Said of a dare-devil, one who runs his head against a wall.

248.

Fiyesi ohun ti o nse.

Mind what you are doing.

N.B.—So we say, "Moyennant l'activité on fait beaucoup avec peu de peine."

249.

Gbogbo agba mo beru nyin, illu mo beru nyin, Oyo misi mo beru nyin.

I present my fear (i. e., *my respects*) to the elders in general; I present my respects to the whole town; I present my respects to all the leading elders of Oyo.

N.B.—A complimentary saying addressed to the elders of Oyo.

250.

Aki igbelle ki ama fohun si 'ra enni.

We cannot dwell in a house together without speaking one to another.

N.B.—Inculcates mutual dependence.

251.

Enni ti fonnu po ko le ise nkan.

He who boasts much can do very little.

N.B.—"Chien qui aboie ne mord pas."

252.

Bi ati rin li ako 'ni.

As one is walking, so is he met.

N.B.—Meaning, that the world takes you at your own valuation.

253.

O nfura bi elefo Tette.

He is as suspicious as the seller of the herb Tette.

N.B.—The vendor of Tette (a common herb picked up everywhere) is a low fellow: if you ask him, "What are you selling?" he at once suspects sinister intentions. These trade-illustrations are common. So the French say, "Il ment comme un arracheur de dents."

254.

Mase gba enniti o yo obbe mu.

Do not lay hold of a man who has a drawn knife.

255.

Ekute ille ni ti enniti o pa on ko don on to ti enniti o gbe on sanle.

The house-rat said, "I do not feel so much offended with the man who killed me, as with him who dashed me on the ground afterwards."

N.B.—This is our "Adding insult to injury."

256.

Ohun elege ki igbe ibaje.

A delicate thing is not difficult to be injured.

257.

Bi ake iggi ni igbo gbohungbohun agba a.

When a tree is cut in the forest, the echo repeats the sound.

N.B.—Said of actions done by noteworthy men.

258.

Enniti o gbon ju 'ni lo ni ite 'ni ni Ifa.

(*The priest*) who is more crafty than another, induces him to adopt the worship of Ifa.

259.

Gudugudu ko se ibe elubo.

The Gudugudu (*a poisonous wild yam*) will not do to be made into flour.

260.

Ibaje isu ni ibaje obbe: enniti o se ibaje enia, o se ibaje enia, o se ibaje ara re.

The badness of the yam is (*laid to*) the badness of the knife: (*but it is soon found out that the yam is in fault; so*) he who injures another injures himself.

261.

O ni ika nino bi ibaka.

He is as stubborn as a mule.

262.

Salala babba ibante.

The Salala (*a superior stuff*) is the father (i. e., *the best*) of aprons.

N.B.—A compliment.

263.

Ibere ki ijo ki enni ki o sinna. Enni ti ko le ibere li o npon 'ra re li oju.

Inquiry saves a man from mistakes. He who makes no inquiry, gets himself into trouble.

264.

O ha mora bi ibepe.

He encumbers himself like the papaw (*when laden with fruit.*)

265.

Enia ki ise 'ni ni rere ki afi ibi su u.

He who has done you a kindness should never be ill-used.

266.

Ibino ko se nkan fu' ni suru babba iwa. Ibino ni iyo offa li apo, ohun rere ni iyo obi li apo.

Anger does nobody good: patience is the father of dispositions. Anger draws arrows from the quiver: good words draw Kola nuts (i.e., *presents*) from the bag.

N.B.—So the Hindi saying, "Associate with the good, and eat Pan: associate with the bad, and lose your nose and ears."

267.

Ibon ko soro ira bi etu, ijo kan li ara ibon igba gbogbo li ara etu, etu ko si ibon di opa.

A gun is not so hard to buy as powder: a gun is bought one day (i. e., *once for all*)—powder must be

bought again and again. Without powder a gun is nothing but a rod.

N.B.—When you undertake a matter that will ever want something, you must look to your ability to keep up the expense.

268.

Ibubu li atu Okun, ododo li atu Ossa, ibi ti a ba li atu Oyan.

Along shore you must navigate the ocean: down channel you must navigate the Ossa: where you please you may navigate the Oyan.

N.B.—The Ossa is the lagoon between Lagos and Badagry. The Oyan is a small stream running into the Ogun or Abeokuta river. The saying is a kind of lesson in matters maritime.

269.

Ibukon ille, ibukon oja ki o ba o.

May the increase of the house and the increase of the market befall you!

N.B.—A popular blessing in the mouth of priest and priestess.

270.

Idi babba eiye, idi babba akosa.

The eagle is the prince of fowls: the eagle is the prince of birds of prey.

N.B.—A compliment.

271.

So idi re fun mi.

Tell me the rump of it (i. e., *the reason*).

272.

Ifa nla ni iya oluwa re li apo.

Inordinate gain makes a hole in the pocket.

N.B.—Haggai i. 6, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little," &c.

273.

Bi ife fo ou li amo li akko eiye.

The Ife is noted by its flight as the bravest of birds.

N.B.—A compliment. The Ife is a small bird with bright plume.

274.

Apadi ni isaju ifonna.

The potsherd (*on which live coals are carried*) goes in front of him who has taken the fire from the hearth with it.

N.B.—The potsherd is an emblem of courage, because it stands fire, and the proverb means that a hazardous enterprise requires a bold leader.

275.

Igba li apa akipa awo.

A calabash may be cut into halves, but not an earthen pot.

N.B.—Said of a thing which does not commonly occur: this we have been accustomed to do, that not.

276.

Aka Igba ta o nawo iku.

He who gathers Igbá-fruit spends the money of death (i. e., *money which he has risked his life to get*).

N.B.—The Igba is a kind of locust-tree (acacia), whose wood is very brittle. So the gathering of locust fruit is called ikujare (iku-je-are), "death is right," or "may be justified."

277.

Igbako sanno, eleko ko sanno, igbako iba si, awamu eleko ko je.

The spoon is liberal, the pap-seller is not: the spoon would have given plenty, the stingy pap-seller would not let it.

N.B.—A taunt to the miserly.

278.

Enia lanan po o ju igbe enni rere won o ju oju lo.

Ordinary people are as common as grass, but good people are dearer than an eye.

N.B.—So we say, Good folks are scarce.

279.

Igbin ko mo ije ato okowo.

Had the snail not known where to feed in safety, it would never have grown so large as to be worth twenty cowries.

280.

Bi igbin ba nfa kawon re ate le e.

When the snail crawls, its shell accompanies it.

N.B.—Meaning, that if the chief sets out the tail will follow him.

281.

Bi ati yin awon li ayin igbin.

As the tortoise meets with due regard, so should the snail.

282.

Je igbo, je ito.

May you eat old age and longevity.

N.B.—Meaning, May you enjoy many days.

283.

Ígbo wa ille eiyekeiyo tu.

The Igbo searches the nests of other birds to plunder them.

N.B.—The Igbo is a bird that feeds on the eggs of other birds. It is the cuckoo of Yoruba sayings.

284.

Oran ko ba ojugon o li on ko li eran.

When the skin is not hurt, it says that it has no flesh (*to protect it*).

N.B.—Meaning, that when circumstances do not call forth a man's resources, he is apt to think he has none.

285.

Igun ti ogun mi ko jo ti egun.

Piercing (*me with a lance*) is not like pricking me with a thorn.

286.

Igun iyan ko jo ti elubo, mimu ni iyan imu kiku li elubo iku.

The pounding of Iyan is not like the pounding of Elubo: Iyan becomes more adhesive, Elubo separates into powder.

N.B.—Iyan is yam-paste, Elubo yam-flour.

287.

Emi ko ri aye wolle nitori ihagaga.

I have no room to go into the house, because of the crowd.

288.

Ihalle ba oso enia je.

Poverty destroys a man's reputation.

289.

Li ennu onihin ni ihin idon.

News is interesting from the mouth of him who tells it first.

290.

Iho odo o bo iho ijo enia molle.

The noise of the river drowns the noise of the people.

291.

Enni ti o nsure kiri ni papa on li o wa nino ewu ati ji si iho.

He who runs about the fields is in danger of falling into a pit.

292.

Ti ossan ti oru iho imo'ko gbe ille li aise, bi o ba dake aje pe o pin.

Day and night the nostril is always at work: when it stops (*life*) is at an end.

293.

Ija ni ije pe illu npe 'o gbogbo won li o ni oruko.

Every one in the assembly has a name; but when you are summoned "in the name of the assembly" (*not in the name of some member of it, you may be sure that*) evil awaits you.

294.

Ija ko bimmo ki o ro.

Strife never begets a gentle child.

N.B.—Tristes ut iræ.

295.

Awa ko ri ese he, ijadan li ansa kiri labbe iggi.

We had no shea-butter nuts to gather: we were obliged to seek about to pick up the remnants eaten by the bats.

296.

Bi aba ndije ni bi ise owo ama ya ni.

When we compete in working, our hands quicken (i.e., *we work faster*).

297.

Ijo ni ti illu, Obba li o li agbo.

The public assembly belongs to the town: a select council belongs to the Obba (*king*).

298.

Ika ko je se ommo re behe.

The wicked man would not treat his own child (*as he treats others*).

299.

Ikan nje ille agba nsoro agba na ti ikan ti ikan.

The white ants are destroying a house: the old man (*who owns it*) complains. The old man himself will (*soon*) be the white ants' food.

300.

Olori buburu ki ire oko Ikan bi oba re oko ikan Ila ni ika wa ille.

An unlucky man should never go to gather the Ikan: he will surely bring home the Ila instead.

N.B.—The Ikan is the brinjall or egg-plant: the Ila is the Okro (occro) or edible Hibiscus.

301.

Ma fi ikanju jaiye, aiye mi ehin li o po jojo.

Be not in (*too great*) a hurry to enjoy the world: you have life enough before you yet.

302.

Enniti aba ni ikara li o li ateteba.

Whoso owns the inner square, owns the outer.

303.

Iwo le ije obi o ise ikki bi?

You are always eating Kola-nuts. Are you an Ikki?

N.B.—The Ikki is a small animal, supposed to live on Kola nuts.

304.

Ojo pa odide aluko nyo, aluko se bi ikko baje ojo mu ikko woso.

(*When*) the rain beat upon the parrot, the woodpecker **rejoiced, thinking that his (*rival's*) red tail was spoiled; but the rain only increased its beauty.**

305.

Iko ekuru ewo Ife; aja ki igbo ni iboji ekun.

(*As*) carrying dust is forbidden in Ife, (*so*) no dog dares to bark near the leopard's lair.

306.

Agbara odo ko jo agbara ikoko, bi agbe odo ka ina ajo, bi asi gun iyan ni ikoko alu.

The strength of a wooden mortar is not like the strength of an earthen pot. Place a mortar on the fire, and it will burn; pound a yam in a pot, and it will break through (*the bottom*).

307.

Oniko ko sa lumo.

A man with a cough cannot conceal himself.

308.

Ikoko aiye ya ju ikoko ti orun lo.

A corner in the world (*of sense*) is better than a corner in the world of spirits.

N.B.—A sentiment familiar to the Oriental poets. Carpe diem, &c.

309.

Ikudu pa esin e 'nyo o mbowa ipa ommo enia.

When your neighbour's horse falls into a pit, you should not rejoice at it, for (*your own*) child may fall into it too.

310.

Ikun babba orisa.

The belly is the father of the gods.

N.B.—So Rabelais of the Great Gaster. In the Persian Al-nameh we find, الخدا خوان دیغما "God is a tray of plunder."

311.

Eko ila gba ara re lowo obbe Ila ti akokiki ko so, gboro ti akokiki ko fa, ommo ife mi ti mo gbekke le ko se bi mo ti ro.

The Okro vegetable, which was so celebrated, does not bear fruit; the pumpkin, which was so celebrated, does not trail: the beloved child, of whom I expected so much, does not answer my hopes.

312.

Ilaja ni igba ogbe.

A peace-maker (*often*) receives wounds.

N.B.—For which reason it is presumed he is "blessed."

313.

Iwo ni ille ode, Ibara ni ille awodi, ati ipe ille aganran?

Iwo is the abode of the parrot, Ibara is the land of the hawk, but where is the territory of the green parrot?

N.B.—Iwo may also mean the flocking together of carnivorous birds, which is regarded as an intimation of a recent or an impending war in the neighbourhood, and Ibara their migration. So the people say, "Awodi loh Ibara"—the hawks are gone to Ibara. The proverb is applied to a stranger who wishes to pass himself off as a man of consequence.

314.

Illeke-opolo ko yin ole li oju.

Frogs' spawn attracts not the robber's eye.

N.B.—Frogs' spawn is supposed to resemble beads.

315.

Iloro li awo ki ato wolle.

One must go through the porch before entering the square.

316.

Bi ankilo fun 'o, fi okilo fun 'ra re.

When you are warned, warn yourself.

317.

Akanse li offa imado jagan oro ki ipa aso.

Arrows for the wild boar must be made to order: a common poisoned arrow will not kill that savage (*animal*).

318.

Bi o ti wu' ni li ase Imalle enni o fi apa eledde je sari.

Any one may practise his Moslem worship as it is most convenient: he may breakfast off a pig's foot.

319.

Imolle ko gboddo tan ara wonje, imo ennikan ko yan.

Covenant makers should not deceive one another; (*for*) one man's counsel is not sufficient.

320.

Afinju ni ijiwo, imoran ni ije obi marimaje ni ije ahusa.

A man of fashion eats the Iwo, a wise man the Kola nut; a man of vulgar tastes eats the Ahusa.

N.B.—The Iwo is a bitter fruit: the Ahusa is an esculent nut.

321.

Imunmuna abi idi sembe sembe, imunmuna ko dana ri, ti ina ti ina ni mba ikiri.

Though the glow-worm never kindles a fire, yet it travels with glowing fire at its tail.

322.

Ina njo ogiri ko sa ama gba gere gere si omi.

Though the fire is burning, the walls do not shrink from it, and yet the fire is trying to consume the water.

N.B.—Said of those who aim at the greater, when they cannot accomplish the less.

323.

Oyibo babba inaja, aje babba teni teni.

The white man is the father of merchants: (*want of*) money is the father of disgrace.

324.

Aki ifi oran ipapa lo eja, aki ifi oran odo ilo afe.

No one should ask the fish what happens in the plain; nor should the rat be asked what takes place in the water.

N.B.—Ne sutor ultra crepidam.

325.

Ipeta li ose apon.

The ipeta is the bachelor's soap.

N.B.—Ipeta is the name of a tree whose root is used for washing and for bleaching cloth.

326.

Irawo san san san alommo lehin bi osupa.

Twinkling, twinkling, twinkling stars, like so many chickens behind the moon.

N.B.—Said of the headman or leader of a host.

327.

Ire ki li orisa se fun abuke ti obi ommo ti o so o li Orisagbemi?

What good have the gods done to the hunchback, that he should name his child Orisagbemi? (i. e., *the gods have blessed me.*)

N.B.—Meaning, why should I acknowledge kindness when I have only experienced evil?

328.

Ireke ni iwa ju esu, adu iggi ki ise omi si 'ni li ennu.

The sugar-cane has a better quality than the bulrush: there are not many plants (lit., *trees*) which can supply the mouth with such sap.

329.

Oni li egbon olla, iri wowo ni ise egbon ojo.

To-day is the elder brother of to-morrow, and a copious dew is the elder brother of the rain.

330.

Aui ki aje Iro ki oro 'ni o si nfon 'ni li oron.

The Iro was presented to us as something which might readily be swallowed, and, instead of that, it chokes us.

331.

Iroju li ohun gbogbo.

Perseverance is everything.

N.B.—With us it accomplishes great things—"Labor improbus omnia vincit."

332.

Iru esin ki ipe idi iru enia, bi esin ku afi iru si aiye.

The horse's tail soon becomes the man's tail; for when the horse dies he leaves his tail behind him.

N.B.—Property often changes hands.

333.

Opo Iru ko ba obbe je.

Plenty of Iru does not spoil the stew.

N.B.—Iru is the seed of the locust-fruit, used as a seasoning. The proverb means, "Good advice never harms, however much be offered,"—somewhat opposed to our "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

334.

Isansa ko yan egun, isansa ko ikawo obbe.

A fugitive never stops to pick the thorns from his foot; the fugitive makes no choice of his sauce.

335.

Aki ire ni ison lo ida si ibu.

No one should draw water from the spring to feed the abyss.

N.B.—No poor man should deprive himself of his small property to make presents to the rich.

336.

Iya ni ti òmmori isasun iya nje didon ommo nje oru.

The pot-lid is always badly off: the pot gets all the sweet, the lid nothing but steam.

N.B.—Said of slaves who work without remuneration.

337.

Onise ki ifi ise re sille re ebi.

Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.

338.

Ise ko mu okko laya ki o ma ran ommo, asise ki ili ara.

Poverty never visits a husband without visiting his children: a poor man has no relatives.

339.

Isowo mbe li orun nawonawo mbe ni iboji.

The labourer is always in the sun: the landowner is always in the shade.

N.B.—Meaning, that one toils whilst the other reaps the fruit.

340.

Isoran ni ise ajo.

The evil-doer is ever anxious.

341.

Itta metta ko konno ebo.

The junction of the road does not dread sacrifices.

N.B.—Sacrifices to avert impending evil are always exposed in a place where several ways meet.

342.

Itadogun li ajo Egba.

A round of seventeen days is the meeting of the Egbas.

N.B.—There are many "savings' clubs" amongst the Egbas. The members meet to deposit their Esu or contributions at certain intervals, usually every fifth or market day. Each member in turn takes the whole of the sum contributed on a single day, until the rotation is completed. Those who come first on the roster secure

in this way a larger capital to dispose of than they would otherwise have been able to command; and the members whose turn comes late, by contributing to the common stock have saved the sums which they would otherwise have expended on trifles. The markets occur every fifth day; from one market day to the fourth succeeding, the first and last both inclusive, the interval is seventeen days: hence the proverb. The day on which the payment is made is reckoned a second time as the commencement of a new series. Even at S'a Leone, the Egbas keep up this system.

343.

Bi iti ko wo owo ki iba isepe.

Unless the tree falls, one will never get at the branches.

N.B.—Meaning, that if you cannot reach the chief you never will manage his men.

344.

Bi o ba tiju o tii fu ra re.

If you are modest, you are modest to your own advantage.

345.

Iwa ni ijo oniwa loju.

Every man's character is good in his own eyes.

346.

Iwo ologbon ko jo ti asiwere.

The appearance of the wise differs from that of the fool.

N.B.—All things are not equal.

347.

Ise ko don iya ko fohun ki amo enniti iya ndon li ara.

Calamity has no voice: suffering cannot speak to tell who is really in distress (*and who is complaining without cause*).

N.B.—It is hard to say who is the real sufferer, great calamity being mostly dumb.

348.

Awodi lo ire iye nwon li eiye si lo.

The hawks go away for the moulting season, and (*the ignorant*) suppose that these birds are gone for ever.

N.B.—Said, for instance, at the departure of an unpopular governor, when people prophesy from their wishes, yet prove false prophets.

349.

O jebbi oran won.

He was guilty in the matter and then sat in a corner.

350.

Ohun ti atejumo ki ijona.

If you attend to what is roasting, it will not be burnt.

N.B.—Meaning, do the thing with all thy might.

351.

Enyi ni ki ama taffa, ki ni ki afi le Ogun? Kanakana li ofi le Boko.

"You say we should not shoot arrows; with what, then, shall we repel the enemy?"

"'Twas with a Kanakana (*a sling*) that one of old repelled the Boko people," replied the other.

N.B.—A proverbial style of discomfiting an objection.

352.

Kanakana eyi ti nre Ibara ni; efufu ta a ni idi pa, oni ise kuku ya.

The crow was going to Ibara; a breeze sprung up behind: "That will help me on famously," quoth the crow.

353.

Enia kan ni iro kangara bo ni li owo.

One man makes bill-hooks to put into the hands of others.

N.B.—Meaning, that every man has his particular trait.

354.

Kanhunl i ommo Haussa, asara li ommo Oyibo, gombo li ommo Onire.

Rock-salt is the produce of Haussa; tobacco is the produce of the Oyibo (*European*); the spoon (*with which the mixture of rock-salt and tobacco is retailed*) is the produce of the chief of Ire.

N.B.—Means, that everything is in its own place. It is amongst the "wise sayings."

355.

Kantikanti ko li oran akeregbe li oron.

The gnats have no quarrel with the calabash.

N.B.—Meaning, that they swarm about it only for the sweet liquor which it contains. It is also said to a bystander who interferes in a dispute which does not concern him.

356.

Ohun Kegio ko de orun.

The voice of the Kegio does not reach the sky.

N.B. —The Kegio is a bird so called from its cry. The saying is applied to one whose voice has not much weight.

357.

Akuko nla ko je ni kekere ki o ko.

A large cock does not suffer a small one to crow.

N.B.—Said when a superior is in office.

358.

Ake ommo bi oju.

He indulges the child as (*if it were*) an eye.

N.B.—Said of an over-fond parent.

359.

Kelleku tan okun je, ki ije behe, okun re don.

(*The printed pattern of*) the calico deceives the country cloth (*which is usually dyed to conceal flaws or coarse texture*); (*the calico*) is not in reality what (*the country*

cloth) takes it to be; (*for whilst the fact of its being dyed makes it seem coarse*), the thread is (*found on investigation to be*) fine.

N.B.—Meaning, that further acquaintance often corrects first impressions.

360.

Ma se ba mi sire ti kere ifi igba okun li oron.

Do not play me the trick by which the fool gets a rope round his neck.

N.B.—Do not be treacherous.

361.

Enniti ko ki 'ni abo, o pa adano e 'ku ille.

Whoso does not salute (*his friend*) on returning from a journey, forfeits the salutation (*usually offered*) to him who has remained at home.

362.

Ki aga, ki ago, ede ara wa li ako gbo.

We may talk this and talk that (i. e., *we may express different opinions, but*) it is because we do not understand one another.

N.B.—Said during arguments.

363.

Kinniu di elewon ki erankoki, ki oma iso je, kinniu ko je eran ikasi. Bi yio ba don ani, bikose erin, biko-se enia, bikose ohun dudu. on ko beru ennikan.

The lion is the pet of the forest: let every beast take heed how he feeds, for the lion does not eat stale meat.

When he roars, he says, "Except the elephant, except man, except the black thing, I fear nobody."

N.B.—The lion, unknown in Southern, is common in Northern Yoruba. The black thing may be the Naki, which some suppose to be the gorilla. Mr. Crowther unsatisfactorily translates it "uran-utan." The proverb is applied to a great man and his rivals.

364.

Kokoro jiwo jiwo, kokɔro jobi jobi lara Obi li o wa, enniti nseni ko gbon 'ni lo.

(*As*) the grubs eating the Iwo, and the grubs eating the Obi, lodge within the Iwo and the Obi; so he that betrays you is not far from your person.

N.B.—The Ibo is a tree whose fruit is called the "bitter Kola." The Ibi is the esculent Kola. The proverb means, that the enemy inside the camp is the most dangerous.

365.

Ako rira ko ni nkan odun kɔ sian sokoto.

As the envious man has nothing (i. e., *is unfit for society*), so grass matting is unfit for trowsers.

366.

Enia lassan ko ni kobbi olowo ko ni ilari.

As no (*subject, however*) rich, may possess a herald, so it is not every man that may possess a palace.

N.B.—The herald is a royal privilege. The word Kobbi here translated palace, means properly, the tall gables of the regal roof; hence, by synecdoche, a palace. The proverb alludes to the species of divinity popularly supposed (in the East) to hedge in kings.

367.

Obba koju buburu si awon olotte.

The king regards rebels with an evil eye.

N.B.—Said to the mutinous and disobedient

368.

Kolokolo iba ku adire ko sokun; kolokolo ko gba adire sin.

When the fox dies, the fowls never mourn; for the fox never rears a chicken.

369.

Konkosso ko da ku elubo.

The sieve never sifts flour by itself (*without some one to hold it*).

N.B.—Means, that first will not act without second causes.

370.

Mo kugbe li ehoro idon li oko, mo mu owo ra li aparo idon li abba baba.

"I am perishing!" cries the hare in the field: "I am a spendthrift!" is the cry of the partridge on the barn-top.

N.B.—There is more of sound than sense in this proverb, which is, however, applicable to ruined fortunes.

371.

Kutukutu ki iji 'ni li erin meji, kutukutu ni ije owuro, biri ni ije alle.

The dawn cometh not twice to wake a man: the dawn is the earliest part of the day (i. e., *time to begin work*); (*with*) the evening twilight comes the night.

N.B.—So our saying, Early to bed and early to rise, &c.

372.

Lakari babba iwa, bi o ni suru ohun gbogbo li o ni.

Patience is the best of dispositions: he who possesses patience, possesses all things.

N.B.—Patience and time run through the roughest day.

373.

Bi apeja tan, lebbe eja ni iha eji li ennu.

When a fish is killed, its tail is inserted into its own mouth.

N.B.—Applied to those who reap the fruits of their own misdeeds.

374.

Bi ina ba jo oko majala afo wa ille.

When fire burns in the fields, the flakes fly to the town.

N.B.—Nam tua res agitur murus quum proximus ardet.

375.

Mimu orun ko jo mimu abbe.

The keen heat of the sun is not like the keenness of a razor.

N.B.—Compares great things with small, inferiors with superiors.

376.

Modumodu babba ejje.

Marrow is the father of blood.

N.B.—A compliment.

377.

Mottimotti ko mo agbe ji, omotti gbagbe ise ijaba.

The drunkard cannot drink a hole in a calabash, though he may drink so as to forget his trouble.

N.B.—Sneering at those who mix strong liquor.

378.

Enniti a mba inaja li awo aki iwo ariwo oja.

You must attend to your business with the vendor in the market, and not to the noise of the market.

N.B.—Be earnest.

379.

Niw aju li ati ijogun ehin li ati ise agba.

A man may be born to a heritage, but wisdom comes only with length of days.

380.

Ommo ki ino bi eranko.

A child cannot be lost like a beast.

N.B.—Shows the superiority of man over other animals.

381.

Obu ko to iyo.

Obu (*or salt earth*) is not to be compared with real salt.

N.B.—Said to a pretender.

382.

Bi ako ri adan afi ode sebo.

If you cannot obtain a large bat for sacrifice, a small one will do instead.

N.B.—One must take the will for the deed.

383.

Bi ino ko li odi, odi ani ino.

If the mind (i. e., *a man*) is not malicious, some one will be malicious against him.

N.B.—All men must have enemies.

384.

Odo gbe ma gbe oruko.

The stream may dry up, but the water-course retains its name.

385.

Enniti o wo odo li onno nko aiya ko fo odo.

He who enters a ruin may fear, but the ruin fears not.

N.B.—One who attacks another is often timid before the attack.

386.

Iya odo on ommo re ko ni ija, agbe li o dija sille fun won: ommo odo ki ina iya re lassan.

The pestle and the mortar had no quarrel between them, it was the farmer that caused the quarrel (*by supplying the yam for pounding*): the child of the mortar (i. e., *the pestle*) does not beat its mother for nothing.

N.B.—Said of a person or a thing that causes disputes.

387.

Bi iwo oku iwo a la odo ya 'na.

If you are going to die, need you split up the mortar for firewood?

N.B.—Better leave it to the survivors. Opposed to the European phrase, "Après nous le déluge."

388.

Odu ki ise aimo oloko.

The Odu herb (*a vegetable used as cabbage*) is not unknown to the farmer.

N.B.—Said of any self-evident thing, a truism, &c.

389.

Agbede bi ofe, amo ara ire bi odide; adebo fun ofe, ofe ko ru aganran gbe ebo o rubo, asinwa asinbo ofe di ara Oyo aganran di ara oko: nwon se bi ofe ko gbon.

Sacrifice being prescribed to the parrot, he refused to offer it, but the green parrot took the sacrifice and offered it; after all, the parrot is a citizen of the capital, and the green parrot is an inhabitant of the province: (*and yet people*) thought that the parrot was not wise.

N.B.—The green parrot is counted a clean bird, and offered in sacrifice, while the parrot is unclean, and never molested. The saying is one of those sneers at religion, much affected by Africans, Hindoos, Chinese, and idolaters generally; but not by any means proving that they are disposed to change.

390.

Odudua igba nla meji ade isi.

Heaven and earth are two large calabashes, which, being shut, can never be opened.

N.B.—Odua and Odudua may mean either heaven and earth, or the supreme goddess of the world, who came from Ife. The saying alludes to the concavity of the sky which seems to touch the earth at the horizon.

391.

Ase ofofo ko gba egba ni ibi ope li o mo; ofofo li egbon ororo li aburo.

A tale-bearer receives not 2000 cowries (i. e., *no payment*); thanks are all his reward. Tale-bearing is the elder brother; bitterness is the younger.

392.

Ennu oforo ni ipa oforo, oforo bi ommo meji o ko won wa eti onna oni, Ommo mi ye korokoro, korokoro, korokoro.

It was the squirrel's own mouth that betrayed her; for when she had brought forth two young ones, she carried them to the roadside, and said, "My children are very sound, very sound, very sound!"

N.B.—Korokoro is an onomatoplasm, imitating the squirrel's cry.

393.

Ofurufu ko se ifiehin ti.

One cannot lean upon emptiness.

N.B.—One cannot do impossibilities.

394.

Ogbo ko li ogun.

There is no medicine against old age.

395.

Bi Ogboya ba fi iru na ille li erimnetta ni illu, illu na atu.

When the Ogboya strikes its tail thrice on the ground in any town, that town will be deserted.

N.B.—A popular superstition: the Ogboya is an animal about the size of a cat.

396.

Ogedemgbe iro ki ida ni si iyewu gbangba ni ida ni si.

The headlong fall of a liar is not concealed, but is exposed to view.

397.

Apon di Ogi o saro.

When a man becomes an old bachelor, he makes his own fire-place (i. e., *he must cook his own food*).

N.B.—Ogi means an old dog, or an old bachelor.

398.

Ogidigbo pari ilu gbogbo; bi owe bi owe li alu Ogidigbo: enniti o ye ni ijo o—Gbo, Ajagbo, gbo, obba gbo, ki emi ki osi gbo.

The Ogidigbo is the best of all drums; the Ogidigbo has a meaning in its sound: he who understands the sound can dance to it—"May you be old, King Ajagbo! may you be old, may the king be old, may I also be old!"

N.B.—This is said of one who can talk eloquently, and quote many proverbs.

399.

Ileri ille ko mo ajagun, kufekufe ko mo ija: ijo ti ari ogun li amo ogo.

Boasting at home is not valour, parade is not battle: when war is seen, the valiant will be known.

N.B.—So the Arabs say, "Character is shown in travel, bravery in the battle."

400.

Ogongo babba eiye.

The ostrich is the father of birds.

N.B.—A compliment.

401.

Ija ni ipa onitiju ogun ni ipa alagbara.

As a street-quarrel will prove fatal to a bashful man (i. e., *a man who fears to be thought a coward*), so will war kill a man renowned for valour.

402.

Gegele li o bi gegele koto li o bi koto, ojo ro si koto gegele nroju.

Bank rises after bank, and ditch follows ditch: when the rain falls into the ditch, the banks are envious.

N.B.—This is said to those not satisfied with their position in life.

403.

Ojowu ko li eran li aiya iba jowu ko yo.

A jealous woman has no flesh upon her breast (i. e., *is always thin*); for, however much she may feed upon jealousy, she will never have enough.

404.

Oju babba ara: awon bi oju, asoro ida bi agba.

The eye is the father of the body: as the eye is too dear to be purchased, so it is hard to act well an elder's part.

405.

Ojugon mu odo fohun.

The leg (*of the wader*) makes the brook resound.

N.B.—Said of one who speaks well, who makes an impression upon his hearers.

406.

Ojumo mo o nyo ojo iku ndi?

When the day dawns, you rejoice: do you not know that the day of death is so much the nearer?

407.

Oju-orun ko huko, illepa ko je ki oku ki o be onna wo.

As the grass cannot grow in the sky, so the dead cannot look out of the grave into the road.

408.

Okele gbomgbo fe ommo li oju.

A large morsel chokes a child.

N.B.—Said of overgreed and ambition.

409.

Okete babba ogun: bi asigun olukuluku ni odi okete lowo.

A store of food is the best equipment for war: when war is proclaimed, every man takes up his wallet.

410.

Gbogbo wa li ajumo fi Okete san ogoffa: nigbati Okete ofi di ogoje, oju gbogbo wa ni yio si se.

We all agreed to value the Okete-rat at 140 cowries (*its usual price*): when 20 cowries are to be added, it must be by common consent.

N.B.—See Proverb 242. This saying means that in matters of law, property, &c., what is fixed by common consent cannot be changed but by common consent.

411.

Okiki Oibo kan ka gbogbo aiye.

The fame of the white man spreads throughout the world.

412.

O kan okikiri.

It comes to the knot (i. e., *the difficult point*).

413.

Owo ologiri ehin ti li ogun.

A multitude of warriors behind their leader is like a flock of palm-birds.

N.B.—Said of a man with a long "tail," or of one very popular.

414.

Iwo ko lu omiran li oru o nlu u li ossan?

Do you not first strike the giant in the night, before you strike him in the day?

N.B.—Bribe your judge at night, and bully him by day when the cause comes on.

415.

Bi abu omi si ori o nwa esse ibo.

When water is poured upon the head, it will find its way down to the feet.

N.B.—This means that good actions sooner or later will prevail. Thus we say, "A stone up-thrown will surely fall." It is also applied to a fugitive slave home returning.

416.

Ije on ore ni imu ommo ise ise.

Competition and reward induce a child to work.

417.

Oni emi nlo, olla n 'nlo ki ije ki ajeji ki o gbin Ahusa.

"To-day I am going!—to-morrow I am going!" (*intended removal to-day or to-morrow*) gives the stranger no encouragement to plant the Ahusa (*although it bears fruit very quickly*).

N.B.—A rolling stone gathers no moss.

418.

O le isun bi Opere.

You sleep like the Opere (*a bird noted for sleepiness*).

419.

Oran na de cpin.

The matter is come to the highest point.

420.

Ko mo ore, ko mo ora, ti igun esin apatta.

Regardless of kindness, regardless of the purchaser, (*the ungrateful man*) rides the (*lent*) horse over the rocks.

421.

Ki ire ore ki o re sinsin idi re.

Though the porcupine be weary, the (*quills of its*) tail will not be weary.

N.B.—There is a superstition that the porcupine always shakes its quills before feeding, in order to divine what success it will meet with in its excursions.

422.

Osupa gbe oke o mo Oyo obba gbe ille mo ara oko.

As the moon remains stationary above, and yet knows (i.e., *shines over*) Oyo, the capital, so the king remains at home, and knows (*what*) his subjects (*are doing*) in the province.

423.

Nwon sebi otosi ko gbon bi oloro, nwon ni o gbon iba ilowo.

Men think that the poor is not as wise as the rich; for if he were wise, why is he poor?

424.

Owe li esin oro bi oro ba no owe li afi iwa a, owe on oro ni irin.

A proverb is the horse of conversation; when the conversation is lost (i. e., *flags*), a proverb revives it: proverbs and conversation follow each other.

N.B.—*Pace* my lord Chesterfield.

425.

Owusuwusu mu oju orun baje gudegude ko je ki orun ki o ran.

The fog spoils the face of the sky: gloominess prevents the sun from shining.

426.

Ta li oje fi obbe 'yi o no je isn.

No one confesses that he has eaten yam with a knife that is lost.

N.B.—So in England; nobody, or the cat, breaks the china.

427.

Enia bi obbo li obbo iya li aso.

The monkey is sure to tear the cloth of any one who is like himself.

N.B.—Said of those who frequent low society; they will surely have their reputations torn, as clothes are torn by a monkey whom one stupidly approaches.

428.

Ohun ti o wu obon ni ifi owo re ira, ohun ti o wu afinju ni ifi owo re ise.

The filthy man lays out his money in whatever pleases him; so does the gay man with his money.

N.B.—No one should meddle with another's rights.

429.

Mofere ipa eiye na. Aki ije ofere li obbe.

"I almost killed the bird!" (*said the sportsman*). "No one can eat 'almost' in a stew" (i. e., "*almost*" *never made a stew—was the reply*).

430.

Ajin ofin ma ta oju ille, opolo ji ofin ma taju ati jade.

A man fallen into a pit, need not hasten to get home: a frog fallen into a hole, need not hurry to get out.

N.B.—When a matter is hopeless, let it be.

431.

Ase ofon bi alakara.

He is as persuasive as a seller of cakes.

N.B.—Said of "sweet-mouf."

432.

Ogan imado ko se iko li oju.

The great wild boar is not easy to encounter.

N.B.—Said to one who undertakes an impossibility.

433.

Ogan use nkan die.

The great one is trying to show off a little.

N.B.—Spoken in contempt of a boastful man.

434.

Ogbagba wolle o kun ati yo.

The pin is driven into the ground; the question now is how to pull it out.

N.B.—We have got into trouble, how shall we get out of it?

435.

Agarawu yi si ogbon ko ku.

Though an Agarawu (*a tribe of the Popo nation*) fall into a ditch, yet he will not die.

436.

Ogbon-oyibo ti ino okun la wa, aso ki li o bori Akese.

Though the white man's gauze came all the way over the sea, yet what cloth may be compared to cloth of Akese cotton?

N.B.—The Akese is the red-flowered cotton; others say, the sea-island cotton. This saying applies to those superior in action.

437.

Ogedde gbe odo so sinsin; eja gbe ino omi dara.

As the banana by the water-side sends forth moisture, so the fish in the water retains its beauty.

N.B.—Said when praising another's good looks.

438.

Ogegge ko li ewa sa li o fi ara we isu.

The (*poisonous*) cassada has no good qualities; in vain does it appear like the yam.

N.B.—Said of a hypocrite,—the daw that wears another's feathers.

439.

Ise ogero li ole iwa ise ko je mu ise agbara.

A lazy man seeks easy employment: he would never choose a laborious one.

440.

Agongo-oggo.

The man with the knotted club.

N.B.—This alludes to some evil entity which we term "devil:" he is supposed to carry an Oggo, or short knotted club.

441.

Bi iwo ko ran 'ni si oja, oja ki iran 'ni si ille.

If you send no one to the market, the market will send no one to you.

N.B.—Nothing can be done without exertion.

442.

Oyibu ta oja ta oruko: Egun ta aso ta edidi.

The European trader sells his goods (*to the Egun or Popo—the people of Badagry and Dahome*): the Egun sells them again with the string round them (i. e., *just as he received them*).

N.B.—This sing-song saying means, that neither of them seeks to make gain by petty retail. The Popo is a middleman.

443.

Ipin ojehun ki ije ina ki o ku.

The good genius of every eater (i. e., *any man*) does not permit fire (*with which food is cooked*) to depart from the earth.

N.B.—Inculcates trust in Providence.

444.

Li ojo alaiye ti de aiye ni iwa ti se.

From the time that the owner of the world appeared in the world, the world began.

N.B.—The customs (رسم) of an empire begin with its establishment.

445.

Okanjua babba aron.

Covetousness is the father of disease.

446.

Iggi okanjua so eso pipo, kaka ki ama ka 'a, o yo ake ti i ike lulle.

A tree belonging to an avaricious man, bore abundantly; but instead of gathering the fruit (*little by little*), he took an axe and cut it down (*that he might get all at once*).

N.B.—This is an African version of our goose with the golden eggs.

447.

Okankan li ase ibi, ikoko li ase imolle, bi atoju imolle tan, ki atoju ibi pellu, bi aba ku ara enni ni isin 'ni.

A man must openly practise the duties of relationship, though he may privately belong to a secret association: when he has attended to this, he must attend to that also, because when he dies, it is his relations who must bury him.

N.B.—Said of the "companies," "trades unions," or private clubs of the Yoruba people, the dangerous "Akoos" of S'a Leone.

448.

Okkin obba eiye, okkin elewa alla.

The Okkin (*crane*) is a king of birds, and the owner of the beautiful white feathers.

N.B.—A compliment.

449.

Oko kiku mo li osi obiri.

The husband's death is the widow's sorrow.

450.

Okun mo onna telle ki oju re ki o to fo.

The Okun must have known the way before it became blind.

N.B.—The Okun is a harmless reptile with many feet (*the millepede ?*), and supposed to be sightless.

451.

Enniti ba hu ipa ko hu ipa, enniti iba hu ele ko hu ele, Okun ti oni igba owo ti o ni igba esse nhu iwa pelle.

The person who might have used his strength, did not use his strength; the person who might have used force, did not use force; the Okun, which has 200 hands and 200 feet, acts gently.

452.

Olle kon are lowo, iyanju li agba ijo gbogbo ni ife ire ni.

Laziness lends a helping hand to fatigue: one must persevere, because fatigue must be felt every day.

453.

Bi oju ommo ko to oran ato awigbo.

If a child is not old enough to be an eye-witness of ancient matters, he must be content with hearsay.

454.

Angba ommo adire lowo iku o li ako je ki on ki o re atan lo ije.

A chicken having been preserved (*by being shut up*) from death (i. e., *the hawk*), complained that it was not permitted to feed openly on the dunghill.

N.B.—A reckless man plunges into peril regardless of warning.

455.

Ope li ope ejika ti ko je ewn ki o bo.

Thanks are due to the shoulders, which keep the shirt from slipping off.

N.B.—Be grateful to the man who prevents you falling.

456.

Ore ije ore, ora ije ora, aki idupe motopo.

A gift is a gift, a sale is a sale, but no one will thank you for "I have sold it cheap."

N.B.—So in African-English the people say, "Dash he be dash, trade he be trade." And the Persian proverb is, "Brotherhood is brotherhood, but a kid is always worth half-a-crown."

457.

Osin mo iwe ino mbi eiye oko.

Because the Osin (*water-bird*) knows how to swim, the other birds are envious.

N.B.—A man clever in business is certainly envied.

458.

Ale koko bi osan ogbe jina ohun ma jina.

(*A cutting word is as*) tough as a bowstring: a cutting word cannot be healed, though a wound may.

N.B.—So the Persians say,

"There is healing for hurt of the sword and the spear,
But the wounds of the tongue—they never heal."

And the French, "Un coup de langue est pire qu'un coup de lance."

459.

Osin ki isin ennu.

Though a man may miss other things, he never misses his mouth.

N.B.—However great a blockhead a man may be, he can always do something.

460.

Pamolle ko oran afojudi.

The viper allows no insolence.

N.B.—The man who can punish enemies will be well treated.

461.

Pellepe.

A wolf (*believed to have been once a human being, a lycanthrope, a loup-garou*).

462.

Petepete Ijesa o ta si 'ni lara ma won.

If the mud in the Ijesa country adheres to one, it will not (*easily*) be washed off.

N.B.—Slander's mud sticks.

463.

Rere oju, oju li afeni suti lehin.

An eye-servant promises friendship; but he despises you behind your back.

464.

Olori li ori isan ki isan akan loke ode.

(*The good genius of the*) head prospers the owner of the head, and not the crab on the bank of the river.

N.B.—A fortunate "spirit" is supposed to reside in each man's brain: the crab is used to represent one who has no connection with or claims on, another. The proverb, therefore, signifies that each man has an exclusive right to the proceeds of his own forethought and industry.

465.

Ohun ti aso siwaju li aba, ohun ti asi gbin, li awa; nikbati ako so siwaju, ti ako gbin sille ki li aoba.

A thing thrown forward will surely be overtaken; a thing planted in the ground will be there to dig up: but if nothing has been thrown forward, what shall be overtaken? and if nothing has been planted, what shall be dug up?

N.B.—As you sow so shall you reap: the industrious make fortunes, the idle do not.

466.

Elekun sonkun o ba ti re lo arokan iba sokun ko dake.

A weeper (*who comes to condole with her friend*) weeps and goes her ways; but one who dwells on painful recollections, weeps and never ceases.

N.B.—Shows that there are different depths of feeling.

467.

Sakata ni ida won won ni Bese.

The morass is an obstruction to the people of Bese town.

N.B.—Said of any obstruction.

468.

Segge ko mo enni obba, ojo ko mo enni owo.

As the Segge does not regard the king's messenger, so the rain does not respect great men.

N.B.—The Segge is the tall "Guinea-grass," bending over the road towards the dry season.

469.

Ille sokoto *or* Ille koto kiki ekan.

A confined room, containing nought but pins.

N.B.—A riddle, meaning the mouth.

470.

Orisa ti akeke ti ko gb' ike, orisa ti atete ti ko gbite, oju popo ni igbe.

The god that would not be pleased when they tried to please it, the god that would not be propitiated when they tried to propitiate it, must take up its abode in the highway.

N.B.—Said of a person whom you try to please and cannot.

471.

Aki imu ibon tetere.

A gun is not to be held carelessly.

N.B.—As we say, "Look at your gun, but don't allow your gun to look at you."

472.

Gbogbo won fe oju toto.

They all distort their faces.

N.B.—A phrase describing the expression of countenance assumed by those who have a laborious task imposed upon them.

473.

O le bi oju eja ti ehin ko le iwe.

It is hard as the eye of a (*smoked*) fish, which the teeth cannot break.

N.B.—Applicable to any difficult matter.

474.

Awin isan ko si owo win.

The borrower who does not pay, gets no more money lent to him.

475.

Wobia yo tan o pe egbe re wa.

The glutton having eaten to the full (*in the house of a friend*), calls his companions also to come (*to the same house, instead of being satisfied with the hospitality he has received*).

N.B.—Said of a greedy and ungrateful guest.

476.

Owon adire bi iti won kolokolo ni mo fi won o.

The vengeance which the fowls imprecate on the fox, do I imprecate on you!

N.B.—A curse.

477.

Enniti o mo wura li a ita a fun.

Gold should be sold to him who knows the value of it.

N.B.—So the Affghan song says, قدر زر زرگر داند.

478.

Yamyam se fuja li aili apa.

The mosquito makes a bold attempt without arms (i. e., *power*) to accomplish it.

N.B.—The buzzing of the mosquito is supposed to resemble the word "Gbe," to carry away. Said of one who undertakes a task far above; as a gnat might say, "Take him up!"—"Carry him off."

479.

Adire olommo yoyo.

A hen that has many chickens (i.e., *the milky way*).

N.B.—So the Oji tribes call the Pleiades "Akokotan ni n'Emma" (hen and chickens).

480.

Aya yo ni ijokan, o ni ki aka on li ehin okankan.

The monkey having one day eaten to the full, desires that his fore teeth may be drawn.

N.B.—Meaning, improvident persons are ready to sacrifice the future to the present.

481.

Aya seju ommo re kiwobo o.

The monkey winked its eye: the young one thrust its finger into it.

N.B.—Meaning, that however quick the wink of the monkey's eye, the motion of the young one's finger is quicker still. This saying exhorts us to be expeditious in our actions.

482.

Iwo mo igun esin re se sesse.

You (*profess to*) know how to ride: how is it that your horse's leg is broken?

483.

Omi li o dano, akengbe ko fo.

It is only the water that is spilt; the calabash is not broken.

N.B.—Meaning, that though failure attended the first attempt, yet, whilst the means exist, another may be made with success.

VI.

PROVERBS

IN THE

EFIK OR OLD CALABAR LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE EFIK, OR OLD CALABAR LANGUAGE.

—•—

The Efik, or language of Old Calabar, is grouped by M. Koelle (Polyglotta Africana) among the unclassified languages of Africa. He has, however, viewed the subject from a purely etymological stand-point. The dialect is spoken by a people who, expelled by intestine strife from the Ibibo, or Egbo Sherry (a large country, stretching from the Cross River westward to the Ibos of the Niger), established themselves on the banks of the Old Calabar River. Their principal settlement is Atakpa, or Duke Town, about 30-35 miles from the sea, in N. lat. 4° 57′, and E. long. 8° 19′, with an estimated population of 4000 souls. Okuritunko, or Creek Town, about 6-7 miles distant, is the second in size, and has contained as many as 3000 souls: it is now, however, in decadence. The total number of the Efik, or Old Calabar people, is laid down at 60,000; but no data exist for forming an exact computation.

In this, the heart of the Biafran Bight, there is a peculiar luxuriance of language, each tribe speaking its own. "For example, if we take Creek Town as a centre, and describe a circle of a hundred miles radius, we shall either include, or trench upon, the tribes of Usahadet

(Bakasey), Efut (Kameroons),* Aqua (Qua), Akayon, Uwet, Umon (Boson), Ekoi and Unene (Ibo). We have in this area at least eight different tribes, with as many distinct tongues, besides the Efik and its various dialects."

This and the extracts below given are borrowed from the laborious and scholar-like work, "A Dictionary of the Efik Language, in Two Parts. 1. Efik and English. 2. English and Efik. By the Rev. Hugh Goldie, Missionary from the United Presbyterian Church, Scotland, to Old Calabar. Glasgow: Printed by Dunn and Wright, 1862." I have not altered the reverend gentleman's orthography, and beg to return my best thanks for his kindness in explaining to me the meanings of the sayings.

1.

Afu edi Adiba.

You are (strong as) an Adiba.

N.B.—The latter is a large turtle of proverbial strength.

2.

Ubuene anyam urua ke afara.

A poor man makes market with his shoulder (i.e., *shrugs his shoulders*).

N.B.—"A toom purse maks a blate merchant."

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* This unhappy mode of travestying the good old Spanish name, "Camarones" is another sample of what light we derive from Mr. Cooley's "Inner Africa laid Open" (!), p. 122.

3.

Akan anwan i-que.

" Old woman cannot see."

N.B.—Meaning, small rain, a " Scotch mist."

4.

Onim aku ye idut (*or* **ufok**).

They keep requital for country (*or family*).

N.B.—Meaning, they remember an injury formerly passed over in their favour, and so pass over an injury done to them now; or they make return of evil. Aku, or Oku, is a debt of retribution, or a requital of good or evil.

5.

Mesin aku ye enye.

I let pass what I might have made palaver about (*that he may do so to me in return*).

N.B.—So I lay him under this obligation.

6.

Ekpuk etu abiat ekuri; akan abiat ama.

A knot in the tree spoils the axe; famine spoils friendship.

N.B.—Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.

7.

Otuk owo nte otuk nkpo ke aquak.

He grinds a man as one rubs something on a grater.

8.

Asat owukha iyak.

The Asat (*fish*) gives laws to the fishes.

9.

Onwon ata ye ekebe.

You drink flood and ebb (i.e., *always*).

10.

Ata ada mi oduk ekebe ada mi owara.

The tide carries me in and out.

N.B.—Meaning, my changing inclination leads me to, and then away from, my purpose.

11.

Atai Abasi.

"The principal wife of God," a name sometimes given to the Utere, or vulture, it being the "Bird of Jove" in Calabar. In their mythology, Ibasi Ibum, and Inyan Ibum (probably personifications of Earth and Ocean) were sons of Ibum Eno.

12.

Atanyum.

Literally, "Speak the truth," an Aqua phrase, meaning a gentleman's dance, connected with an Egbo (mystery or association).

13.

Ofuro ayara.

He becomes barren.

N.B.—Spoken of one formerly respectable in conduct becoming addicted to evil habits.

14.

Ison odiok ibikput enye ofuro ayara.

The soil is bad for the corn, it becomes good for nothing.

N.B.—Said of a place in which a man becomes poor.

15.

Obaha mi.

It escaped me.

N.B.—Spoken, *e.g.*, of a thing dropped out of the hand, or of a stone thrown, hitting some one accidentally.

16.

Owo emi abanade owo, owo enwen onyun abana enye ntre.

A man who talks of others behind their backs, another will talk of him in like manner.

17.

Iyak ebe inyan.

The fish has been kept over one tide.

N.B.—A proverbial phrase for It is spoiled.

18.

Kubiene enye nsia.

Do not cause his bowels to wither.

N.B.—Meaning, do not overpower him with dread. So a man will say, "My bowels fail within me" (from great fright); or, "intense dismay (mbariba) makes my body feeble."

19.

Owo oru ebit idu nte ndek mon.

That man is as frigid in his manner as cold water.

20.

Obiumo (*or* abiat) idemesic.

She spoils herself.

N.B.—Said of a woman bearing twins, who, in Old Calabar, are liable, like the mother, to be destroyed.

21.

Nyin ikpobon akam ino Abasi ikpon, koru Abasi okupde akam owo obonde ono Enye.

We should pray to God only, for God hears the prayers which man addresses to him.

N.B.—This I suspect to be a missionary saying.

22.

Imo isanake ikpon, owo miduhe eke etienede imo, ikon odua.

The yawner says, he does not walk alone; if there be

no one to follow him (i.e., *catch the infection*), the leaves of the trees will fall.

N.B.—This is a Nke, fable or adage, spoken by one who, knowing that his death is determined on, seeks an opportunity to kill some one, so as not to die alone.

23.

Enye adana ubum.

He secures the canoe by giving earnest-money.

N.B.—The individual gives two coppers, one for the bow, and the other for the stern, as earnest money, so that he claims the right of purchasing the boat when it is made. The Okuk is a brass or copper rod, the circulating medium of Efik, as far as such exists.

24.

Okuk emi edi eridana Ukot.

These coppers are the earnest-money of the Ukot (*the Raphia vinifera, or bamboo palm*), so that I claim to buy the Mimbo (*or Min Efik, the palm-wine*), when it is drawn.

N.B.—"Min" is any beverage but water. Min Makara, "white man's beverage," is rum. I have already noticed the similarity of the widely spread word Makara or Mbakara, with the American-negro slang "buckra man."

25.

Edet fu ke inua edekhe nte mkpai.

Your teeth in your mouth are perfect, firmly compacted together, like a cluster of palm-oil nuts.

N.B.—A neat and idiomatic compliment to a lady.

26.

Eset esie ana sun nte emi mon edenide.

His heart lies quiet like limpid water.

27.

Ufok etuk edeni.

The house is rubbed quite clean.

N.B.—When smeared with *bois de vache*, which lays all the dust. This is a custom here as in Hindostan.

28.

Adia uku ete esie.

He reaps the benefit of the respect in which his father was held.

N.B.—Said of a child receiving support from respect to his dead father.

29.

Ekpri etu adiana akamba ndien okpun.

The small tree-climbing plant adheres to the large one, and thus grows big.

N.B.—Meaning, he attaches himself to the fortunes of some great man, and so prospers. So the East Indian saying, that insects in flowers ride on the heads of Rajahs.

30.

Idian adiari, isua akabade.

The cricket cries, the year changes.

31.

Edim edep, idiokke aban; ama ebiere, ndien ada aban odiok.

While the rain fell, he did not place his jar (*to catch it*); now that it is over, he takes his jar and places it.

N.B.—Meaning, he has after-wit; he is wise behind-hand.

32.

Ebut ama enyene adia ye unen, unen ama enyene esie ada odok okom.

If the goat has anything, he eats it with the fowl; if the fowl gets his portion, he goes up on the roof of the house.

N.B.—Meaning, I share with you when I have anything; but you do not do so with me.

33.

Abasi mimana owo, Utere iduaha.

If the Creator does not like a man, the (*sacred*) Utere-vulture will not descend (i.e., *in token of the acceptance of his sacrifice when he makes the Usara-feast, and throws out flesh to be eaten*).

N.B.—Meaning, if God had not favoured, or been pleased with me, I should not have met with this good fortune.

34.

Owo odua ke ukut, adaha; owo odua ke inua, idahake.

He who falls by his foot (i.e., *slips*) shall rise again; he who falls by his mouth shall not rise.

N.B.—Meaning, by imprudent speech he commits himself, gives his enemy power over him.

35.

Owo oru odubi ufok.

That man makes his house big.

N.B.—Meaning, he grows or is wealthy: the highest ambition of the "gentleman" being to build a grand abode.

36.

Abak odun ofiok eyup atat.

He who comes early to climb knows the palm-nut which has the fly.

N.B.—Meaning, he who knows him of old, knows what liberty to take with him; or, having known it himself, he is able to sympathise with others—Miseris succurrere discit.

37.

Oduok ntekhe, enye emen.

He left an overhanging shade, and the other entered it.

N.B.—Meaning, the one took advantage of the shade, or cover, which the bush afforded to follow the other unobserved.

38.

Enye oduokho mi.

He falls upon me.

N.B.—Meaning, he fastens a quarrel upon me: not being able to meet the great man who has angered him, he causelessly vents his wrath on me.

39.

Oduri eka enyin.

He gives titles to his mother.

N.B.—Meaning, he calls her by childish names of endearment.

40.

Ndutke ndikok ntukon udia esie.

I am unworthy to grind pepper for his food.

N.B.—Meaning, his shoe's latchet I am unworthy to loose.

41.

Akpa ke ebebat.

He dies with the (*free*) man he has killed, in retaliation for killing a man.

N.B.—Ebeba is retribution which does not repair the injury done, as in exacting a tooth for a tooth, &c. "Usiene" implies restitution.

42.

Ebet, *or* Ebed.

The smallest antelope in Calabar: it is said to indulge much in sleep; hence, a drowsy fellow.

43.

Ikon eben idianake eben ke idem; inua owo ifonke abanade owo.

The leaf of the Eben (*a kind of plum-tree*) is not close to the fruit; the tongue of one man upon another is bad.

44.

Afu omoduk ebende nte oyu.

You turn into a running sore, as a boil does.

N.B —Meaning, you become vile.

45.

Anam eben-idem.

He prepares something which may be buried with him (*or used in his Ikpo*).

N.B.—The Ikpo, or funeral rites, open with a cry called Eku, and a ceremony named Eyarare Mkpa; literally, the revealing of the death. Until this is done a person, however long dead, is not legally so; but is, in popular phraseology, said to be sick. There is a particular word—Mbukpuisi—for the unwashed state of women at such times.

46.

Enye otup ebeta ono mi.

He speaks ironically to me.

N.B.—Ebeta is an expression of annoyance, made by answering in an absurd way, as a man charged with a deed, when he knows the accuser to be aware of his innocence, answering, "Yes, it was I who did it!"

47.

Ebok imana ebok ofut idibi.

One monkey does not like another to get a belly-full.

N.B.—Meaning, you grudge that I should get any.

48.

Moyum ndikut isu ye edem.

I wish to see face and back.

N.B.—To hear both sides of the question.

49.

Isu ye edem ebuno eneme.

Face and back meet and talk.

N.B.—Both parties meet and confer.

50.

Owo ese edun edem nkpo, Abasi ese idem eset.

Man looks only on the outside of things; God looks into the very heart.

51.

Inyan inyan ofiok edem ubum, kpa ntre ke Abasi ofiok ini mkpa.

It is the sea only which knows the bottom of the ship, so God only knows the time of death.

52.

Ofop edem kiet, ada edem kiet edem udia.

He burns one part of the tree, and with the other he cooks food.

53.

Edem edi uso odunde ata kiet ye edet.

The tongue is a person of skill, dwelling in the same place with the teeth.

N.B.—Silence is gold; it is good to say nothing that can provoke or that cannot be proved.

54.

Eyen Otukutute akan eyen eden-akpa.

The young of the Otukutute (*a species of small shrimp*) surpasses the young of the Eden-akpa (*a certain large river-fish*).

N.B.—Meaning, the child of the poor man often outstrips, in the race of Fortune, the son of wealth.

55.

Akanam nkpo oru nte Ederi.

He did that thing as if it were Ederi.

N.B.—Meaning, as if he were drunk (i.e., *imperfectly, or in a slovenly way*). Ederi, or Ereri, are two days in the Calabar week, called respectively Aqua and Ekpri (*Great and Small*) Ederi. When used without adjective, Aqua must be understood, and the day is called in the River "Calabar Sunday," kept with feasting and tippling.

56.

Ikpaha ke edet.

It has not lost a tooth.

N.B.—Meaning, it is not a whit the worse, or not one of his things has he lost.

57.

Edim idibonke udi mi.

The rain shall not beat on my grave.

N.B.—Meaning, I have a son to build a house over my grave. I am not childless.

58.

Unam obaha afia, ababak edinukha etu.

The animal escapes the trap, and stands in dread of a bent stick.

N.B.—Our "Burnt bairns dread the fire."

59.

Edisam owo inyeneke ibat.

A man sauntering (*unsettled*) has no business.

N.B.—He does not attend to his own matters.

60.

Mbok, ikot nyin, mbufu ekubigi odup ke iton union.

I beseech you, friends, do not behead Edup on account of its long neck.

N.B.—The Edup is a species of brown antelope. The meaning is, do not condemn the man merely on account of his bad character.

61.

Kuda owo isu efe une 'nan ebigi.

Don't take a man before the palaver-house, and give a blind man the beheading of him.

N.B.—Don't set me to do a thing of which I know nothing.

62.

Efiakha mi.

" My finding!" an explanation when one comes upon anything of treasure trove, as boys cry " Tibs I!"

63.

Ata ada mi oduk, ekebe ada mi owara.

The flood takes me in, and the ebb takes me out.

N.B.—Meaning, that varying purpose, or desire, makes me unstable.

64.

Ekikere esie etie nte mon ubum, aka isu afiak edem.

His opinions are like water in the bottom of a canoe, going from side to side.

N.B.—Meaning, that, unstable as water, he shall not excel.

65.

Ekpa ete, ikaka urua, ikaha ibit Itu, edi ibit ama enem imo, imo iwaha inek.

Says the Epka (*a small, bald-headed woodpecker*), he was going to market; he was not going to the drum at Itu (*alias Old Ekrikok, a tribe and district on the east bank of the Cross River*); but the drum was so pleasant, that he turned aside and danced."*

N.B.—Meaning, I did not seek this; I have been led into it.

66.

Abiat ekpe.

Literally, He spoils Egbo; *i. e.*, he, by a certain ceremony, appeals to Egbo, or claims the interference of a member of Egbo.

N.B.—Ekpe is the first and original grade in the Egbo institution, a kind of West-African Freemasonry.

67.

Ekpeberusun ete, eyu nkpo edi ndaha iba, itie-itie imo imen ifoa ita; itie-itie ifoa emen imo ota.

The Ekpeberusun (*a kind of scarabæus*) says, "Times are not always alike; sometimes he lifts the ball of dung, and throws it to the ground; sometimes it lifts him, and throws him to the ground."

N.B.—One must meet with adversity as well as prosperity.

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* It is to be observed in the Efik that it uses the third personal pronoun, instead of the first; the latter is the picturesque form in which the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker are put in the Scriptures and in the languages of Western Asia.

68.

Ek-pe-nyen-e-u-kut-e-tib-i-e-nan-i-dib-i.

Literally, "If he had a foot, it would come out through the belly of a cow."

N.B.—The proper name of a constellation.

69.

Ekpenyon Ibiirtam.

The name of a great juju, or fetish in the Ibo country, at the unexplored place called Odu, or Aro, resorted to for ordeal trial, and various abominations, by all the coast tribes between the Niger and Old Calabar. Thence, it is said, the Calabar people brought their Ekpenyon, or most common object of Efik worship, viz., a piece of the Ekóm tree, frequently surmounted by a human skull.

70.

Ekpo akpa mbufu ituaha, etua udi; usun ekpo oyum akan udi.

You lament not the dead, but lament the trouble of making a grave; the way of the ghost is longer than the grave.

N.B.—Meaning, his case is more to be deplored than yours. Ekpo, incorrectly translated Satan, demon, devil, &c., is a ghost still remaining on earth—though a ghost-land or Hades (*Obio Ekpo*), is sometimes spoken of—and doing as much injury as possible. Hence the biennial ceremony of Ndok. About the month of November they set up Nabikim, or scare-crows, of old cloth, &c., to attract and trap the ghosts of those who died since the last purification. A few days afterwards they begin, in the evening, a terrible noise, scream-

ing, firing, drumming, and battering house doors, which lasts till the morning. The Nabikim are then thrown into the river, and the town is considered purified. I have heard of a similar ceremony performed upon an effigy of Judas Iscariot in Catholic lands. Ekpo also means a cramp, which is believed to be the effect of "possession;" and Mbum 'Ekpo, supernatural beings, or devil-men, is a familiar name for whites.

71.

Ekpuk etu abiat ekuri; akan abiat ima.

The tree-knot spoils the axe; hunger spoils love.

72.

Eku ete, esin udia ke mfine awak, ke ida iton imo ika.

The rat says, "Put plenty of food in the trap, for he takes his neck and goes: he risks his neck."

N.B.—Meaning, there is a good deal of risk and trouble in the matter; make the reward liberal.

73.

Ikot itie ekuku-ekuku, esa onwin idem.

The forest is full of pit-falls; the Esa crooks itself, bends its body in the narrow turnings, in order to escape.

N.B.—Meaning, there is plenty of trouble there: a small man should walk warily, lest he be involved; or, there is a quarrel against me, I cannot go. The Esa is a very small, bay-coloured antelope, found in Ibibio, and of which is said "Esa abon unam"—Esa is the king of beasts.

74.

Ekuriku otarade enye ke idem.

Literally, Ekuriku (*risings in skin from cold or fear, goose-skin, hair on end, horripilation,*) rises up abundantly.

75.

Enye oduro ke edem enin.

He mounts on the back of the elephant.

N.B.—Meaning, he puts himself under the protection of a great man. The elephant has never been literally ridden in intertropical Africa.

76.

Ama ke enyin.

He loves to the eye.

N.B.—Meaning, he makes an outward show of friendship.

77.

Onim enyin ke usun, ete, enye eyedi mkpon.

He keeps his eye on the door.

N.B.—Meaning, he waits in expectation for one coming to-morrow.

78.

Ntakha akpan ke usun inwan ererimbut imana owo udono.

As an old torn basket on a farm road, so the world does not like a sick man.

79.

Ererimbut odaha owo akpanika nte mbre.

The world speaks truth to a man as play.

N.B.—Meaning, it is true what I say; but I do not bring it forward as an accusation.

80.

Erise ke isu.

Literally, a beholding the face; hence a finding favourable reception for a proposal or request.

81.

Afu erut.

You are uncircumcised: a taunting reproach. "Mbobi," or circumcision, is practised, though not as a religious rite, by both sexes; boys are operated upon about eight days after birth; girls on reaching puberty, and whilst secluded and fattened for marriage.

82.

Ebiet etie okuku-okuku. esa obok idem.

The ground slopes; the Esa antelope leans to one side in walking.

N.B.—Meaning. there is danger or quarrel: it is wise in an uninfluential man to stand aloof.

83.

Ini Esefe ye Akpara.

The time of Esefe and Akpara.

N.B.—These proper names are apparently used only in proverbs. The above adage corresponds with our "time of Adam and Eve."

84.

Eset mi oduk ye enye.

My life is set upon her.

N.B.—"Eset," the liver, is here, as in Western Asia, generally the seat of the affections. In old days we had the spleen, so Dunbar, in the "Merle and Nightingale," sings,—

"God bade eke love thy neighbour fro the spleen."

Of late years, the heart is the intellectual viscus. The Efiks speak of "a word from the liver" (*i.e.*, sincere opinion), "a large liver," a "double liver" (deceit), and "no liver" (or no courage), whilst in danger a man's "liver fails him."

85.

Uwem fu etie nte esikon (*or*, ukut esikon).

Your life is like a tobacco-pipe (*or its shank*).

N.B.—Meaning, you are easily destroyed.

86.

Manam nkpo ma Esunkomonko!

I shall do that thing, by Esunkomonko!

N.B.—This is an oath by a supernatural being that inhabits the bush between Duke Town and its dependency Henshaw Town.

87.

Etigi okup idok onwum idem; okup ndaeyu akpa etak.

The Etigi or Okro (*Hibiscus esculentus*) hears the time of harvest and bears fruit, reproducing itself; it hears the dry season and perishes.

N.B.—Meaning, you come near me only when there is anything to be had, not when work is in hand.

88.

Etikit-ekpo otup ama idan.

Etikit-ekpo (*a small bird*) shoots away, exhausts all your arrows, avoiding them easily from its small size.

N.B.—Meaning, I can easily put aside all you do or say against me.

89.

Etikuo mon.

Water drawn with the back towards the river or spring, and in certain cases used as a charm.

90.

Etikuo idim inono ewok.

A stream coming down won't let you swim up.

N.B.—You cannot swim against the stream, a proverb common to almost all nations.

91.

Etiridon oduk owo enyin akabade okput.

If the sap of Etiridon (*a certain tree or shrub*) go into the eye of any one, it becomes a cataract.

N.B.—This is a popular belief.

92.

Ekpo ete, eke ererimbut; ererimbut ete eke 'Ekpo.

Ekpo says he belongs to the world; the world says he belongs to Ekpo.

N.B.—Meaning, he tries to keep in with both parties, like Æsop's bat. Such men are reproachfully called "Etinkeni Ekpo," and these uncivilised people think it a point of honour, unlike us, to take one side and to keep to it.

93.

Nwariwa ada etuek-etuek, ete, akpa edi ofn owo.

Nwariwa (*a kind of tree*) stands with clustering fruit (*and*) says, "An orphan is a slave."

N.B.—Meaning, the state of the fatherless is pitiable.

94.

Etun-etun inyeneke abak ada; unam mkpa inyeneke uton.

Etun (*a small kingfisher*) cannot afford an allowance for dividing it; a dead animal has no ears.

N.B.—Meaning, he is deaf to what I say.

95.

Ntukon ayat ke usun iton, ererimbut ama mi ke eyen-nsek.

Pepper bites the throat; the world loved me when I was a child.

N.B.—I was a favourite in infancy; but now it is otherwise.

96.

Afu oyum ndida mi 'nam unen eyit fu?

Do you wish to make me your peace-offering, your scape-goat?

N.B.—Said to one who, after being reconciled to a friend, shows his zeal by fastening a quarrel upon some other for touching anything belonging to his friend. Eyit is a medicine of various ingredients sprinkled over those who come together after a difficulty: the concocter, as he stirs it about, curses himself and others if they harbour any malice in their hearts. A more simple symbol of reconciliation is for one party to drink off half a glass of rum, and then hand it to the other, who finishes it.

97.

Mon odiokho ke ata mon odiokhode, eyen esere ke eyu ete odude.

Water rests in the place it should rest, finds its level.

N.B.—Everything according to its nature; and the boy is saucy while his father lives.

98.

Enye afak usun.

He redeems the road.

N.B.—Meaning, he purchases from his fellow-townsmen who have preceded him the right of going to a market.

99.

Afak idem esie.

She redeems herself.

N.B.—Spoken of a female slave who bears a child for her master.

100.

Afakha mi ke edet.

It sticks in my teeth.

N.B.—Meaning, the injury or slight comes from a quarter, in which I dare not show resentment.

101.

Efep isu ke ika oru.

He turns away his face from that word.

N.B.—This shows dissent or displeasure, and at the same time blinking the question.

102.

Ndaeyu efere owo.

The dry season makes one feel lightsome.

103.

Enye ofiara kenyon nte adan.

He floats on the surface like oil.

N.B.—He is not in the secret; he does not penetrate the matter.

104.

Fium nkoi.

A crocodile with a spine like a catfish. It is said to be smaller than the other two species (*the long-mouthed and the garial or short-mouthed*), but more dangerous, and to drive the others from any creek which it enters. Into this animal, which is probably fabulous, persons who have a charm for the purpose are said to metamorphose themselves for malicious purposes.

105.

Enye ofon mi okut usen.

He was lucky for me at the opening of the day.

N.B.—Meaning, he was the first person I saw on coming out in the morning, and he brought me luck. Also a Hindu superstition.

106.

Abon (*or*, **nkpo**) **oru ifonke aba.**

That chief (*or thing*) is no longer good for anything.

N.B.—A phrase, sometimes used covertly to announce the death a chie .

107.

Fuk idibi.

Blow your belly.

N. B.—A jocular phrase, spoken to one with an empty stomach.

108.

Ntan udi ofuk (*or*, otuk) mi.

The dust of the grave touches me, or causes a fluttering sensation in the neck or back of the shoulders, when one feels wearied when digging a grave.

N.B.—Supposed to forewarn a man of his death. This spasmodic and fluttering sensation in any part of the body, or knocking the foot against anything, is a warning that something is about to happen. The first sensation does not always presage evil; sometimes a fluttering of the vein or skin is deemed a token of good; when the uduri-uden, a part of the leg on which the paddle rests, gives the sign, it shows the paddler that he must go into his canoe.

109.

Enye ofuro ekpe.

He assumes the appearance or practices of a leopard.

N.B.—Meaning that, by painting his body with stripes he disguises himself so, and lurks in the bush to attack people or animals with sharp-pointed weapons. He is also called Mfúro-ekpe, "sham-leopard."

110.

Iban.

A stake or stakes put up by the Efiat people to mark out their fishing-grounds. They are reverenced as objects of superstitious rites, or their site is chosen as a spot to pay such rites.

111.

Ibe.

Leanness of body, exhibited by a child when, through renewed pregnancy, the mother is unable to yield it proper nourishment.

N.B.—This is contrary to the practice of the people.

112.

Ibok.

An object of worship, protecting from evil. It is in the shape of either a dwarf or of a human head, is adored by offerings, and kept inside the house to preserve it from harm.

113.

Ibok-ekon.

War medicine. It is of two kinds: one, probably an intoxicant, inspires courage; another, rubbed on the body, gives safety in the fight.

114.

Ibuk isinke ofop.

Even a miser does not refuse his cook part of what he roasts.

N.B.—Meaning, you will surely allow me this.

115.

Enye enyene eti ibuut.

He has a good head.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a man of understanding.

116.

Owo oru odu ke idak fu.

He is as familiar with your affairs as if he were a member of your family.

117.

Owu idaha nuenubok kiet isio idan.

A man does not use one finger to take out an arrow.

N.B.—Meaning, he is but one, he cannot do it.

118.

Kude akan idap.

Do not die!

N.B.—Spoken ironically to a lazy man.

119.

Idem omum enye.

The demon possesses him: he is a demoniac.

N.B.—Such possession is commonly believed in. The Idem is an invisible superhuman being, inhabiting woods and waters, worshipped and propitiated by prayer and offering. It is also a representative of Egbo, who runs about the town, Egbo himself appearing only on great occasions. The Idem of each class of Egbo has his own insignia. Finally, it is a proper name, and spoken as a Nke, or fable; it means that the person to whom it is applied is weak for want of food.

120.

Ika idibi.

Literally, matter of belly (i.e., *a concealed affair*). The Anglo-African translates this, "Palaver lib for him 'tomach."

121.

Obup idion.

He enquires at Idion, or mutters incantations, when going through his tricks.

N.B.—Idion is witchcraft, wizardy, the spells of the Abia-idion, or magician.

122.

Idumo akan ikpon, ikanke otu.

The attempt exceeds the ability of one, not of a multitude.

N.B.—Meaning, union is strength.

123.

Idumo enin odumo ke okom.

An elephant will reach to the roof of the house.

N.B.—Said when the greatness of any one is much talked of.

124.

Nka iferi, *or* **nkaiferi.**

The naked class.

N.B.—Meaning, young unmarried girls.

125.

Afu edi ifiok.

You are wisdom itself.

N.B.—Said in ridicule to a wiseacre.

131.

Owo ada nkpo oru oduri enye ke ifukhi.

Some one takes and puts it in his lap.

N.B.—Meaning, the person persists in charging him with it, or in making it a big matter.

132.

Ada ke ifure.

He obtains it easily (e.g., *from a friend, not being under the necessity of working for it*).

133.

Asana ke ifure.

He goes after his pleasure.

N.B.—Meaning, he goes to see a friend, not to "make palaver."

134.

Mbok ofon yak nyin itie itie ke ufok emi ke ifure.

I beseech thee let us remain in this house in quietness.

N.B.—A prayer uttered by one entering into a new or strange house, as he pours out a little rum or palm wine in libation.

135.

Ika okono mfan.

The deliverance (*or sentence delivered*) hangs up the pepper.

N.B.—Meaning, the matter is settled. Mfan is the root of "Mbukpa," which resembles Malaguetta pepper in form and taste, and is used as pepper. The small tubes are strung as beads, and hung round the neck, as a sign of submission, giving protection in war or in palaver. To "eat Mfan" is to be reduced to the greatest straits.

136.

'Ma ndaha ika mi, afu obop ke ikon otup oduok; ini ama anam, afu etuene ikan asana oyum.

I gave you advice; you tied it to some grass and tossed it away; having done so, you lighted a torch and went about seeking it.

N.B.—Meaning, I gave you my advice, but you rejected it; now you find it is of value to you.

137.

Ikon-eset.

A beat-breast.

N.B.—Meaning, an office-bearer in each Nka or order, of which there are now seven, divided chiefly according to age. Each of them takes its turn to watch the town; and in case of war or public work the inhabitants are called out according to their several classes. The official announces the resolutions of the Nka in any matter by knocking his breast. He also claims as his perquisites the breast of any animal killed for a class-feast.

138.

Ebok okup ikon eyen atu ikot, eke ata ikot, enye ikupke.

The monkey hears the cough of the hunter's attendant, but does not hear the monkey's own.

N.B.—Meaning, you make a great ado when any one does so, but you do so yourself without scruple.

139.

Akaka ikot ikut?

Did you go to the tortoise bush? (i.e., *to wait to catch one.*)

N.B.—Said to anyone who keeps others waiting on him.

[illegible]

Oquahare ikpat ke ebiet oru.

He wipes his feet at that place.

N.B.—Meaning, he declares he will have nothing [illegible] with it.

[illegible]

Owo oru! [illegible] [illegible]!

That man! [illegible]

N.B.—[illegible] unjustly accused.

[illegible]

Udari [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ikpa.

If the [illegible] justice might [illegible] for the [illegible].

[illegible]

Ikukpa [illegible] [illegible] imo imakpa.

Ikukpa ([illegible] above; should [illegible].

N.B.—Meaning [illegible] others explain [illegible] spoken to.

[illegible]

Ikunetu ntan [illegible].

The Ikunetu ([illegible] does not take a [illegible].

N.B.—Meaning, [illegible].

150.

Enyene inua enyene ubok; enyene inua-inua ifonke.

If he has hand and mouth too; but to have mouth only is not good.

N.B.—Meaning, it is foolish to boast, unless the boaster can make good what he says.

151.

Enye enine fi ke inua nte inun.

He is sweet as salt in your mouth.

N.B.—Said ironically of one who is always showing himself hostile.

152.

Inyan (*or* mfin) emi esiere nwan ye ebe.

This water (*or this day*) is like wife and husband.

N.B.—Meaning, there are contrary currents, or unsettled weather.

153.

Iyak akpa inyan esin; ibietke ntutu inyan ibum.

The sea rejects the dead fish; it does not seem to have been in the ocean.

N.B.—Meaning, now I am useless, you cast me off.

154.

Ekikere asana isan akau ikpat; ikpat akpasana isan ekikere, okpokut mi idiok eyen.

The thought travels quicker than the foot; if the foot should travel at the thought's rate, you would call me a bad boy.

N.B.—Meaning, if action were as ready as thought, we should reveal many a now concealed folly.

155.

Idaha inuen edi isara.

The standing of a bird is just his perching.

N.B.—Meaning, I stand as you see; I have nothing to do in the matter. Or, he stands as you see, with nothing but his cloth around him.

156.

Isebe ete, inwanake enwan, itokhake utok, iyekup edem ke iko.

The crab says he does not fight nor quarrel, but he will bear his back in the calabash (i.e., *be captured*).

N.B.—Meaning, why do you come to make palaver, or assault me so? We have no quarrel.

157.

Nkpo iseri.

A thing touched by another, which the proud man (*owo iseri*) cannot use till it is wiped.

158.

Enyene ison-ika.

He has but one word.

N.B.—Said of a true man.

159.

Akpatre isuni ikanke mkpa.

There is no worse curse than to desire a man's death.

N.B.—We also say, "It is ill waiting for dead men's shoes."

160.

Owok nte iteminun.

He swims like a basket of salt (i.e., *he sinks*).

N.B.—Said in ridicule to one who cannot swim. The Iteminun is the fillet or cone of Nkanya (palm fronds, of which roof-mats are made), in which the people store salt.

161.

Ono ituen esok fi.

He sends his threat to you.

N.B.—A feather of the Ituen (a large black and white fish-hawk) and wad of gun are sent from one tribe or town to another as a threat or declaration of war, which opens if the articles are accepted. So the Ntan-ituen, or hawk's feather, can be worn on the head only by one who has killed or captured an enemy in battle.

162.

Anwambana inyeneke okudok aran, ete idia iwewe.

The cat has not a farthing's worth of oil, yet he says he will feast on Iwewe.

N.B.—Meaning, your aim is above your means. The Iwewe is a dish of coarsely-mashed yams, not adhesive like Fufu.

163.

Owo iflokke iwuk uwem esie.

One knows not the stability of his life (i.e., *how long it will continue*).

164.

Iyak okpun onyon aka idim.

The fish when grown big returns to his rivulet.

N.B.—Meaning, you must not forget your origin.

165.

Owo iyip.

A man of blood, a blood-man, one who has taken the Mbiam-iyip (*blood-oath*) and has made brotherhood with another by tasting of his blood. A common practice throughout Pagan Africa.

166.

Ofon owo ndikut ukut, nkan mkpa.

It is good for a man to bear trouble rather than die.

167.

Inyene akan enye idem.

His wealth is superior to him.

N.B.—Meaning, he is an insignificant man whose wealth is his only importance.

168.

Enye ada owo akana ke ibuut (*or* akana owo ke ibuut ono ewut, *or* osio isup).

He gives up a man as his substitute to be killed, *or* to liquidate his fine.

N.B.—This "substitution" system, the "Badli" of India and Sindh, is exceedingly common in Old Calabar. Another saying is, "He (the slave) dies for that for which his master should have died."

169.

Kere odaha, ete, owo ekere nte anamde utum, ke ekem ini utum.

The Kere (*a rare small bird whose note is heard in the plantations when clearing-time approaches*) says, "Men must think of doing work, as the time for work has come."

170.

Uwem esie (*or* iton esie *or* enye okobo fi).

His life (*or injury*) lies upon you.

N.B.—Meaning, it will be your crime if you kill him by Ifot. See No. 128.

171.

Enye edi aqua etu emi nkpo okomode keset; enye ama odua, kpupru nkpo akpa.

He is a large tree on which all things hang, or are entwined; if he falls, all perish.

N.B.—Spoken of a great man.

172.

Mo ekpehe enye emana.

They cut off his birth (i.e., *his rising greatness*).

N.B.—Meaning, they destroyed (*kpehe*) him to prevent him becoming too great or wealthy—a fatally common practice in Calabar.

173.

Kpi nton.

Nick the bamboo (*that runs across the roof*).

N.B.—Meaning, remember it, treasure it in your memory.

The Kere (*a rare small bird whose note is heard in the plantations when clearing-time approaches*) says, "Men must think of doing work, as the time for work has come."

[illegible]

Uwem esie (*or* **itom esie** *or* **enye okobo f**).

His life (*or injury*) lies upon you.

N.B.—Meaning it will be your [illegible] if you kill [illegible]. See No. [illegible]

[illegible]

Enye edi [illegible]

He is a large [illegible] entwined: [illegible]

N.B.—Spoken of a great man.

[illegible]

[illegible]

They [illegible]

N.B.—Meaning [illegible] becoming [illegible] Calabar.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

N.B.—Meaning [illegible]

174.

Abia-ibok okpoha ukpon fu, ono fi ukpon owo enwe.

The Abia-ibok (*medicine-man*) changes your soul (*life?*) and gives you that of another.

N.B.—Meaning, you being about to die, he gives you the soul (life?) of one who is likely to live long, bestowing yours in its place, so that you live and he dies.

175.

Okpori ukut eberi ke ebek.

He wipes his trouble on his cheek.

N.B.—Meaning, he exercises a patient forbearance.

176.

Ekpe iba, ubum okuba.

The two-mouthed man; his canoe will turn bottom up.

N.B.—Meaning, evil will befall him.

177.

Okuk enye nkpo.

He shut her up to fatten (i.e., *before marriage*).

178.

Nte afu okukha nkpo.

Do you seclude yourself (i.e., *as a young woman when fattening for marriage*)?

N.B.—Spoken to a man who sits much in the house.

179.

Eyen okune ọfon.

Lit., The boy tries on a waistcloth (*the local toga virilis, meaning, he attains the age of puberty*).

N.B.—Usara ukune-ofon is the feast given on that occasion: the father fixes the time generally when the son has passed his fifteenth year.

180.

Ota mkpon oyum mba.

The planter of koko (*Colocasia esculenta*) wishes but a seedling.

N.B.—Meaning, having a nest-egg, or something to begin with, he will multiply.

181.

Mo eyesubo mbai mbufu nte owo osubode mbai abia.

They will destroy you as men destroy the Mbai (i.e., *yam-cuts for planting, laying waste the plantation*).

N.B.—Meaning, they will destroy you and your race, root and branch.

182.

Nda mon ison ntuak oko? Idun mbia oson mkpa.

Where shall I get a spot to plant a fence (i.e., *to build a house*)? The abode of the tale-bearer is worse than death.

183.

Oduok mo Mbiam.

He throws them Mbiam.

N.B.—Mbiam is a liquid tasted when swearing, and causing dropsy to perjurers. The above means, he throws this liquid about

the place to punish those that have been guilty of a theft, the perpetrators of which are unknown. When one would "*annual Mbiam*," or release himself from the oath, he must present gifts to, and forward prayers through, the keeper of Mbiam.

184.

Itiat ofon urua, edi mbiumo.

A stone is a good market thing, but it is a burden.

N.B.—Meaning, the thing is desirable, but it is beyond my purse; or the woman is fair, but her expensiveness renders her unfit for my wife.

185.

Idiok etu nte edinukha mbokok ete, inenekede, enye obuno.

The bad tree, like the crooked sugar-cane, says he will not straighten; he breaks.

N.B.—Meaning, he is now too old to change his habits.

186.

Inyan akamana ofiok edem ubum; mbubet afu ofiarade do edi ikpikpu.

The sea from its birth knew the bottom of the canoe; a piece of drift wood, you float there and are nothing.

N.B.—Meaning, I was in this matter from the first, and know all about it; and you now come and wish to oust me.

187.

Odion mbubiam, mbubiam akabade iseri.

He bestowed benefits on this lewd man, and the fellow turned out haughty.

N.B.—Meaning, he raised up a wretch, who was of course ungrateful.

188.

Amia mi mbubiam.

He beats me shamefully (i.e., *not being able to cope with him, I am beaten at his pleasure*).

189.

Mbubum-mbubum owo inamke nkpo.

A man always breaking off from his work never finishes anything.

190.

Mbuebuep adia nkpo ison.

The Mbuebuep (*or colt's-foot leaf*) eats the thing on the ground.

N.B.—Four leaves of this plant are employed to receive the sacrificial blood when making the Idion "Egbo Chop," or incantation.

191.

Mbuka ke anam mi.

I have a presentiment of evil.

N.B.—Mbuka is a very bad omen, as of the warning of the owl.

192.

Obume mbume okup usem.

He who asks questions hears (*or learns*) the language, or gets interpretations.

193.

Mbume ke eyen-owon enyin ekpuni.

The Mbume (*mud-fish*) is a small thing, but it has big eyes.

N.B.—Meaning, you presume much for a young man.

194.

Mbup ete, imo idike eyen-owon isua iba.

Mbup says he will not be a boy for two years.

N.B.—Mbup is a small yam, partly given to the women who weed the plot, partly kept for food.

195.

Mbiaekon awak nte mfan ikot.

The people of Mbiaekon are as abundant as the leaves of the forest.

196.

Onwon min mfanifa.

He drinks palm wine like the Mfanifa (*as we say, like a fish*).

N.B.—Mfanifa are the minute flies that flock to anything sweet.

197.

Mfanko ukom imana ukom, erikpuk arata imana arata.

One plantain pulled off the bunch does not finish the plantain; biting off a little of the Arata (*plantain or koko prepared for preservation*) does not finish the Arata.

N.B.—Meaning, a little from your abundance will not ruin you.

198.

Eku edue mfine, mfine ata eku; miduehe mfine, mfine itaha.

The rat enters the trap, the trap catches it; if it did not go into the trap, the trap would not do so.

N.B.—Meaning, if I do wrong I shall suffer for it, but not otherwise.

199.

Idiok oduk idem, mfon imekheke; mfon mi ekobi ke ubet, idiok mi enyam ke urua.

My badness is more manifest than my goodness; you lock up my goodness in the room, and you sell my badness in the market.

N.B.—You conceal my virtues and expose my vices.

200.

Mfut akakan.

The shade circles.

N.B.—Meaning, the supremacy, or royalty, leaves one family and goes to another; the wheel of Fortune turns round.

201.

Etu emi okari nte 'mon.

This tree grows like water (i.e., *rapidly as the tide fills up*).

202.

'Mon emen mi afiak.

The tide carries me back.

N.B.—Meaning, my inclination leads me to return.

203.

Ebeisu omono enyin idim.

The one who passed before you saw the eye of the spring.

N.B.—Meaning, older men know better things than you.

204.

Akani mukanda omum unam, obufa mukanda imumke.

The old net catches animals, the new does not.

N.B.—So we say, An old head is better than a young one.

205.

Eyu nkpo enyene ndaha mba.

The wheel of Fortune has two states; sometimes exalts one, sometimes depresses him.

N.B.—We are told that this saying is not often used; it appears to be a pure translation of a well-known Arabic couplet.

206.

Ikot etie ndak-ndak Esa obok idem.

When noise fills the bush the Esa antelope goes aside.

N.B.—Meaning, keep out of the quarrel, don't thrust yourself into it.

207.

Abasi anam ndap.

God creates dreams.

N.B.—So we say, True dreams come from Jove.

208.

Mokut nde ekpe eyetde ubok.

I see the trace of the leopard where he has washed his hands (i.e., *thrown up the sand in rage because he has caught nothing*).

209.

Ami eyen ndem Efik, esien duupeba.

A proverbial saying equivalent to "I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

N.B.—Ndem-Efik is the tutelary deity of Calabar, and an annual victim to it is thrown into the river. The chief priest is Abon-Efik. Another proverbial saying is, "Ndem-Efik white-washed you," denoting escape from great peril.

210.

Monim ndita 'no fi.

I present you with dainty food.

N.B.—Said when offering a fat goat to a friend.

211.

Ndion ata owo etyene uyai; okim ata mi etyene su.

The Ndion (*an eruption like prickly heat*) follows beauty (i.e., *fixes on a man who has beauty*); why does mine follow me?

N.B.—Meaning, he is in the habit of going to the houses of the great; why does he come to mine?

212.

Ndisime aka ada ifiok idun, ndien ifiok ada ndisime owara anwa.

The foot takes the wise man to his dwelling, and the wise man takes the foot to the public street.

N.B.—Spoken of one who foolishly exposes himself, who makes public all he does or says.

213.

Enyene nditik-enyin.

He has a *nom de guerre*, a nickname in a good sense.

N.B.—All Calabar chiefs have some such name, which can be announced on the drum or other instrument.

214.

Enyene akamba ndon-eset.

He has great consolation (i.e., *he has the power of bestowing consolation*).

215.

Sin ndum ke 'mon nwon, Abasi anyana fi.

Put chalk in water and drink it: Abasi saves you.

N.B.—Meaning, let gratitude penetrate your heart: God has saved you.

216.

Kuyak 'mon akan ndum.

"Don't let the gunpowder (*malt*) get above the (*meal*) chalk."

N.B.—Ndum and Nkan, chalk and gunpowder, are sometimes sent as offers of peace or war to a neighbouring tribe or chief.

217.

Afu edi ibok, edi ndut-ndut ibok.

If you were medicine you would be very bitter.

N.B.—Said of a person of waspish temper.

218.

Isip eke nɔ, eyup eke ne.

The kernel and the oil-nut have one mother.

N.B.—Meaning, I cannot favour one more than another. So we say, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

219.

Onim enim eyeɔ ison.

He dives like a free man.

N.B.—Spoken in ridicule of one who cannot dive. So in Germany, He talks like a nobleman.

220.

Nkarika ikpakke equon isan.

The one (*edible*) snail does not demand of the other that he walk quick.

N.B.—Meaning, you need not censure or advise me: you are as bad youself.

221.

Nkem-idem owo ofon ndisana.

It is good that equals consort together.

222.

Amia nkene atana ese.

He beats the Nkene, and proclaims his exploits.

N.B.—The Nkene is an iron instrument, which a man may carry and beat publicly, for silencing and boasting after he has killed a leopard or an enemy. So our saying, "He blows his own trumpet."

223.

Owo nkpan utɔn.

A good listener (i.e., *one fond of overhearing anything so that he may go and tell it*).

224.

Nkpekpem akan ifut ifiok.

Nkpekpem (*the small bat*) surpasses the tortoise in knowledge.

N.B.—Meaning, that man knows something which you do not know.

225.

Nkpofiok, ekpere edem ibehe isu.

"If I had known" stands behind; it does not come forward.

N.B.—Said of those wise behindhand.

226.

Uka-umumke nkuku afu ete, eyen enyene.

You have not caught the locust (*or grasshopper*) which you say belongs to the child.

N.B.—So our adages: First catch your hare; Count not your chickens before they are hatched; Gut nae fish till ye get them.

227.

Mbufu edi nkunbuk owo.

You are an "omnium-gatherum."

N.B.—A reproach addressed to slaves as collected from all the neighbouring tribes.

228.

Nkuno odum fi, afu aka amia 'mon.

The crab bit you, and you go and beat the water.

N.B.—Meaning, why do you punish me for what he did?

229.

Edinen usun inyeneke nquana.

A straight road has no turnings.

N.B.—Meaning, he is undeviatingly good, or uniformly prosperous.

230.

Enye anwana nsa.

He gives an emphatic denial (*viz.*, *to charge on solicitation*).

N B.—Nsa is a sign of wiping down both arms, and as it were throwing off what was on them: or the fingers are placed on the breasts, and the arms are thrown out, exclaiming at the same time Nsa, nsa, fu! "far from you!" (danger or guilt). Sometimes it is said when a child sneezes.

231.

Onim nsan.

He plants a man-trap.

N.B.—The Nsan is a kind of harrow of nails, or hard pegs, set in board, or sharp stakes concealed in the ground against trespassers.

232.

Nsasate ete, imo isuk ibon, ke edi akai okpun.

Nsasak (*a small dull-coloured bird called the king of birds*) says he keeps on speaking, although the forest is big.

N.B.—Meaning, I have a standing as well as he, although I do not equal him: or, They pay no regard to what I say.

233.

Enyene nsen ke idibi eti.

She has many eggs in her womb.

N.B.—Said of a woman who has many children.

234.

Da nsen unen se.

Take an egg and look at it.

N.B.—Meaning, you are not perfect, like the egg which has uneven ends. Said to one boasting of his beauty.

235.

Uwem owo ebiet nsen unen, obaha owo odua ke ison akpa.

The life of man is like the egg of a fowl; it drops out of one's hand, and falls to the ground and perishes. Another saying to this effect is, "The life of man is like the leaf of the Koko vegetable," *i.e.*, easily destroyed.

236.

Kpep enye nson-idem.

Teach him industry (*or hardihood, that he may be able to work for his livelihood*).

237.

Ukot otoi ntap-ntap oyaha aban.

The Mimbo (*palm-wine*) tree drops by degrees and fills the pot.

N.B.—Meaning, he or they will silently and gradually worm themselves into possession.

238.

Afu edi ntenebene mo.

You are their football.

N.B.—Meaning, you cannot hold your own, all ill-usage and imputations are heaped upon you.

239.

Ntiene Abiakpo okure esak.

The train of Abiakpo is no more, and men laugh.

N.B.—Meaning, his boon companions desert him now he is poor.

240.

Enye esin fi nton ekpat.

He puts ashes in your bag (i.e., *that by their dropping he may trace you, and thus enable him to dog your footsteps*).

241.

Owo okut eyu anwan unwon.

When a man sees sunshine he dries his tobacco.

N.B.—Meaning, "Make hay while the sun shines."

242.

Akam edi Ikiko ikan ata, nwanwa edi su (*or* nwa-disu) ikpa Atan.

If the fire consumes the Ikiko (*civet cat*), how much more the skin of Atan (*the bush cat*)?

N.B.—Meaning, if such a one, superior to you, has been taken, how much more you?

243.

Nyakun ibanke ekpe ayara itam.

The Nyakun (*a mollusc or a medusa*) did not buy Egbo, yet wears a hat.

N.B.—This is said of the animal's appearance: only native "gentlemen" wear hats, and they must purchase the permission.

244.

Nyek-nyek-urono ama anam Utai urono inan.

The small dragon-fly has made the Iguana deaf.

N.B.—Meaning, I do not wish to hear you. So they say, "I know very well the Utai, or Iguana, is afflicted with deafness," to ridicule an empty threat, or to refuse attention to what is said.

245.

Nyun.

A regeneration; thus, when a woman has a child shortly after the death of another, she supposes it to be the former one returned.

246.

Afu edi Obin-uqua.

You are an Obin-uqua.

Said to a man ever singing or crooning.

N.B.—The Obin-uqua is a large white bird, so called because of its song, whose note resembles the canoe chant; the people suppose its voice can turn the tide. Like the turtle dove of the East it is supposed to chant till it dies, or at least till it falls down exhausted.

247.

Obuben urua obun urua; otu obun ekon.

The basket-cover at the market breaks the market; the shield breaks the battle.

248.

Obukpo esie ofon.

Its vileness is good.

N.B.—Spoken of a thing useless for its proper purpose, but which may be applied to some inferior end.

249.

Ata ntukon akpa uyat, odun-obio owo akpa mbime.

The eater of pepper is like to die of pain; the sojourner is like to die of questions.

N.B.—Meaning, the inquiries made respecting town matters pester him, as he has no interest in them.

250.

Ofion esin udia.

The moon refuses food.

N.B.—Meaning, she does not shine at the time of the evening meal. She is also said to "devour the ground" when she shines brightly.

251.

Ofop fu!

Your roast (*or meal*)!

N.B.—Spoken to a guest when giving him yams to cook as he likes best.

252.

Okim asakimam.

"It pricks, he laughs."

N.B.—A prickly shrub, so called because no bad effects remain with one who laughs when extracting its thorns.

253.

Idumo enin odumo ke okom, nkom, afu omoflok ete, enin ikpunke nte okom.

The elephant is said in size to reach to the roof; but you know it is not so big.

N.B.—Meaning, you exaggerate, speak hyperbolically.

254.

Kuda okonok uno mi.

Do not bring your bad fortune on me (i.e., *by putting your word or hand in any matter of mine*).

255.

Owara ana mi ke okpo isu.

He comes forth and lies at my very face (i.e., *thinking of him, he immediately appears*).

N.B.—So we say, "Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear."

256.

Etemtem imenke ikut, ekpi okput ekemen.

He who cut the bush down did not take a tortoise; will he who lops the branches take one?

N.B.—Spoken of an undeserving man, who looks to a reward for an action not acknowledged in a man of merit.

257.

Okuk inyeneke ifum.

Coppers (*country coin*) have no place where they are thrown away.

N.B.—Meaning, they are always of some value.

258.

Omon idiok otibi idet ke edem.

The Omon baboon is shaggy.

N.B.—This animal, found in the interior, is said to have a large mane of whitish hair, and may be the gorilla, the Inaki of Yoruba.

259.

Manima dup nyu, nkup Oti!

Manima be silent: I hear Oti!

N.B.—Meaning, you may shut your mouth now that he begins to speak. Manima is a small musical instrument much used in Ibibia: it is made of metal and beaten with a stick. The Oti is also of metal, with a bit of wood inside acting as clapper to the bell.

260.

Enen nte oton.

He is straight as an Oton (i.e., *erect in carriage*).

N.B.—The Oton is a stick on which fish are skewered.

261.

Afu atua nte Owuri.

You cry like an Owuri (i.e., *much, continuously*).

N.B.—The Owuri is supposed to be a monster lizard that makes a long mournful sound at night. The natives believe its bite to be fatal.

262.

Usun eye aquana.

The road is fair but crooked.

N.B.—Meaning she is fair in face, but perverse at heart.

263.

Inyene asakha su!

How immense the riches!

N.B.—Said to ridicule one parading his wealth.

264.

Urono anam mi ndutukha, tutu asana mi ayak.

The sickness afflicts me till it leaves me (i.e., *the disease runs its course*).

265.

Enyin mi asat.

My eyes are dry.

N.B. —Said when one finds himself unable to sleep.

266.

Usari asat mi eti (*or* idiok).

The Usari bodes me good or evil (i.e., *when heard on the right or left hand*).

N.B.—The cry of the Usari or great king-fisher bodes good or evil, according to the position of the bird with respect to the hearer.

267.

Sek san sek san oba owo etie.

Move a little off! move a little off! deprives a man of his seat.

N.B.—Meaning, by little and little a man is wrested from his position.

268.

Sekhede nam okpun (*or* ekpri).

Shift a little, make it large (*or small*).

N.B.—Directing a man to move the hand in cutting anything, to make the portion cut, large or small.

269.

Owo iflokke me enye idisiereke mkpon.

A man knows not whether he will see to-morrow.

270.

Ino isioho ukut ke ino esie, owo nsu isioho ukut ke nsu esie, mo 'esasana.

The thief withdraws not his foot, desists not from his theft, the liar desists not from his lie; they go on.

N.B.—So with us, "the dog returns to his vomit."

271.

Unwon (*or* esikon) osip idem, isipke nsun.

The tobacco (*or pipe*) is small, the smoke is not small.

N.B.—Meaning, behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth; or, he is a small man but large of heart.

272.

Soap eyen ubuene.

Lit., "Poor man's soap."

N.B.—It is the produce of a tree, used as a substitute for soap.

273.

Ndita iban abon esosobo.

The daughters of a great man go off quickly in market, and are easily vendible (i.e., *are soon married*).

274.

O Abasi, mekpe fi ubok, nam mi nkeme nte nsonode nsana; ikpat mi isonke, etie nte eyen nsek emi etendeten.

O Abasi (*God*), I beseech thee make me strong to walk; my foot is feeble as a young child staggering.

N.B.—A prayer sometimes made to the Creator in sickness or difficulty.

275.

Kpuno owo eke osonode fi, koru osono owo oson iflok.

Reverence your elder, for the man excelling in age excels in wisdom.

276.

Iyip esie eyesop fi.

His blood will lie on you to your hurt (i.e., *will be avenged quickly*).

N.B.—Spoken to a man who has murdered his friend.

277.

Asuan (*or* awari) ika ono mi nte owo asuan ntan.

He showers his words on me as a man scatters sand.

N.B.—Said when one is abused so that he cannot get in a word.

278.

Eyen osudi ete esie ke idiok idu.

The son disgraces his father by bad conduct.

279.

Osudi idem-esie.

He disgraces himself (i.e., *by living below his means and rank, by squandering his wealth, or by allowing an inferior in wealth to assume a position and authority superior to his*).

280.

Edim esuene mbufa.

The rain spoils your gentility.

N.B.—Said to such as carry an umbrella, and are without one when overtaken by rain.

281.

Enye adia osuna.

He eats and is at ease (i.e., *he takes only what belongs to him, or he does only what is good for him, and therefore it is well with him*).

N.B.—Spoken, *e.g.*, of an old chief, mild in his rule.

282.

Idiaha isuna ke obio emi, anam oyum usun mkpa.

He does not keep himself quiet (*or well behaved*) in the town; he does that which tends to his own destruction.

N.B.—Said, *e.g.*, of an habitual thief.

283.

Abasi ota fi nte mfine ota eku.

God strikes you down as the trap strikes down the rat.

284.

Ediwak owo etaba uwem mo ke nsu.

Many destroy themselves by falsehood.

285.

Midionkpo mo eyetak ye mo.

Their evil deeds will remain with them (i.e., *the consequences will remain with themselves; or they will not be able to accomplish their wickedness*).

286.

Tara mi idem.

Inspirit me.

N.B.—A slang phrase used by topers when asking for a glass of rum.

287.

Tatabunko (*or* obu) enyene 'mon, afiak asana mben.

The Tatabunko (*a small fish*) or the Obu (*a shrimp*) has the whole river to swim in, but it keeps by the side.

N.B.—Meaning, he who may well do so, does not give himself those airs or assume so much as you do who are nobody.

288.

Ibio 'mon ke aban eten owo.

A cask half filled with water makes one (i.e., *who carries it*) unsteady in his gait.

289.

Afiak ibok ke ubok ayat, nditakha ke enyin editie didie? Enyin iditibeke fi?

You roll the medicine in the hand and it pains you; how will it do when dropped into the eye? will not the eye fall out?

N.B.—Meaning, why do you seek intimacy with one so disagreeable as an acquaintance?

290.

Utok Abasi etiene idionkpo owo.

The controversy (*or displeasure*) of God follows the sin of man.

291.

Murua etik ekpe enyin.

Murua ascribes such names to Ekpe (i.e., *as he shakes a noisy instrument called Ekput*).

N.B.—Murua is an officer attached to the three highest Egbo grades, who mourns and howls at the funeral of any one dying free of those grades. Ekpe is explained in No. 66.

292.

Enye otot idaha oru.

He assumes office (i.e., *by sending round the usual gifts*).

293.

Odumo ndituak ukut ki nkpo eke afu edidade unan ke idem-fu.

You try to knock your foot against that which will wound you.

N.B.—Meaning, you knock your head against a post, you kick against the pricks.

294.

Ntumo ubok fu.

I invoke your hand (i.e., *I claim your protection*).

295.

Otumo ete esie.

He calls upon his father.

N.B.—This, as in India, is the custom: when anything startles a man, he calls his father's name.

296.

Otup ibuut ke edem.

He throws back his head.

N.B.—Thus making a sign that he understands.

297.

Ubio nkpo eno enye.

They plant "Obeah" for him.

N.B.—"Ubio" means any medicine or charm put in the ground to cause sickness or death. It is manifestly the origin of the West Indian "Obeah." We shall be less surprised to hear that the word has travelled so far, when told by Clarkson, in his "History of the Slave Trade," that when the traffic was a legitimate branch of commerce, as many slaves were annually exported from Bonny and the Old Calabar River, as from all the rest of the West African coast.

298.

Adia nkpo ye ikut ofiok ubok nasia ikut.

He who eats with the tortoise knows his right hand.

N.B.—Meaning, one who has "eaten a peck of dirt" with a man, knows what he does.

299.

Ukut ebud edikhi ke ata nte ubok ebud edikhide.

The hind foot of the goat is planted on the same spot on which it planted the fore foot.

300.

Uduak nkpo oru oyukha mi.

The purposing of that thing tires me (i.e., *he is ever talking of doing it, but never does it*).

301.

Uduono-owo.

A prodigal. Also a name formerly given to ship-captains who took any kind of slave, sick or well, feeble or strong.

302.

Kukpa ndibon idem-fu ufen.

Do not beat yourself (i.e., *do not kick against the pricks*).

303.

Kukpe ikpe ufik.

Do not judge tyrannously (i.e., *giving the right one the wrong through respect of persons*).

304.

Ufion inyeneke mbuk nte idua.

It is not worth talking about a slip of the foot as if it were a fall.

305.

Ufon.

A mark of approval or acquittal. "King Calabar" marks the arm of the recipient with chalk or with "Utu"—"Egbo powder," a yellow wood reduced to dust.

306.

Asak ukaha adiaha Okori.

She laughs sillily, like the eldest daughter of Okori (i.e., *she laughs hysterically*).

307.

Ekpok ikarake ukim odok, ino inyeneke nkpo oyip.

The lizard cannot clasp round the cotton-tree (*Bombax*) to climb; the thief has nothing, and steals.

308.

Odun-adian ukim oduokho mbara ukim.

That which is close to the cotton-tree receives the dew from the cotton-tree.

N.B.—Meaning, he is benefited by his connection with a great man. So we speak of living with the rose.

309.

Afu ke ekeme ye ukpaha-ekpo.

You are as bad as an Ukpaha-ekpo (i.e., *an evil being constantly besetting one, like the Hindu Rakshasa*).

310.

Ukpek ete, nte imo nte imo, ata idumke usam.

The Ukpek (*a fish with narrow back and body expanding downwards towards the belly*) says, if all were like him the smith would not make a fish-spear.

N.B.—Meaning, if all do as I do, there is no danger.

311.

Enye enyene okposon ukpon.

He has a strong "soul" (i.e., *he bears up well under adversity*).

N.B.—The "Ukpon" is the shadow or umbra of a person or thing that moves; not being stationary as "Mfut," the shadow of

a tree. Missionaries naturally translate it "soul" or "spirit." It is supposed to issue from the body and to visit certain places, especially in dreams; an individual may be deprived of it, as the West Indian negroes suppose a man's shadow may be caught, in which case he soon dies. Moreover, the "Ukpon" of a healthy man may be transferred into a sick body, the latter recovering to the detriment of the former.

312.

Ukpon anam enye urono.

His shadow makes him sick.

N.B.—Said when a man is seized with temporary mania, and fancies himself his "Ukpon." In this sense the word, like the Etus of the South Sea Islanders, signifies an animal—as a leopard, a fish, or a crocodile, with whose existence the life of the individual is bound up. If the "Ukpon" sickens or dies, so does the man whose shadow it is, and *vice versâ*. Finally, many people have the power of metamorphosing themselves into their "Ukpon."

313.

Ukpri esu eye eti-eti.

His diminutiveness is beautiful (i.e., *is no deformity*).

314.

Ukure ufok edi emi.

This is the finishing of the house (i.e., *I shall make it no bigger*).

315.

Ukut akabade obop ubok.

The foot turns and ties the hand (i.e., *the inferior gets above the superior*).

316.

Matuak eti ukut mfin.

I knocked my lucky foot to-day (i.e., *I came at good speed*).

317.

Ina uma utum fu edi ini efen.

The completion of your work will be some other time (i.e., *you neglect the proper opportunity*).

318.

Enyene ibuut unam.

He is an incorrigible fool.

N.B.—"Unam" answers to our "beast," more nearly to the French "bête," including all land animals excepting birds. So Cicero confessed himself to have acted like an "asinum germanum," —a genuine donkey.

319.

Ekpo ete, Una-oduro.

The ghost says, They are of the living (i.e., *he has no companionship with them*).

320.

Adia nkpo ke unom.

He eats more than suffices him (i.e., *he has made away with things got in trust*).

321.

Owo oru enyene unwa ke iton.

That man has a bend in his neck.

N.B.—Meaning, the wrinkling and overlying of the skin covering the cerebellum, as seen in persons of full habit.

322.

Ibuk ye unyim eduk nkpo kiet, ndieu edi ibuk ofon akan unyim, koru ibuk obukhare nkpo ono, unyim inono.

The "Ibuk" (*a miser*) and the "Unyim" (*a selfish niggard, emphatically a miser*) are alike; but the miser is better than the niggard, for the miser brings out a thing he may have put in store and gives, the niggard never gives.

323.

Makara okpok ufok oyum unyon.

The white man strips off his house.

N.B.—Meaning, he removes the mat roof made over the deck of a ship lying in the river, and is about to take his departure.

324.

Abiabun kpa suk ke otu uquak.

A needle is as valuable as a heap of iron bars (i.e., *he is worth many of you*).

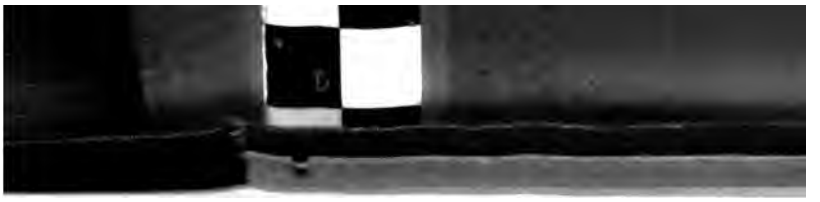
N.B.—The Uquak, or iron-bar, was here, as in Bonny and other places, the standard of value; it is now supplanted by the copper, of which four makes the old bar.

325.

Inua fu ekeme ye uquok.

Your mouth is like the Uquok (i.e., *you are too saucy*).

N.B.—The Uquok is a tree with a rough leaf, which is rubbed as a punishment on the lips of evil speakers.



326.

Abasi odon owo urua; afu ama anyam urua fu ama, afu emen akpan fu onyon.

Abasi (*God*) sends man to market; when you have made your market, you must lift your basket and off.

N.B.—Meaning, when God's purpose with you is served, you must die. In England, all the world's a stage; in Old Calabar, a market.

327.

Afu odiok nte uruikot.

You are drunk as a snake (*the emblem of all that is vile*).

N.B.—They also say, "He would drink the produce of an Ewoi" (*the largest kind of toddy-palm*), and call the drunkard "Eyen min" (*son of palm-wine*).

328.

Uruk uwem esie okibe.

The thread of his life breaks (i.e., *he dies*).

329.

Usan antika: usan akanem, *etc.*

The Usan is a shallow dish, kept on the Isu Abasi (round altar-like mound in the middle of a yard with bones, etc., before which prayer is offered to Abasi), or on the Isu-Ekpo (the family altar, upon which various "medicines" are placed, and where prayer is made to the deceased paterfamilias). When worshipping, the devotee pours a little water into them. Usan Abasi (also called Eset—*assiette?*) was formerly kept by the head man in the middle of the town, and if any stranger

broke it he forthwith belonged to the place. Also Abon Efik (King of Old Calabar) placed them there after the feast-inauguration.

330.

Usan emana.

Plate of birth (i.e., *the spot where every individual is in the other world before his birth into this*).

N.B.—A Platonic idea, whose type in El Islam is the Yaum el Alast, when the to be embodied spirits were created and marshalled.

331.

Usan akana.

Plate of vow.

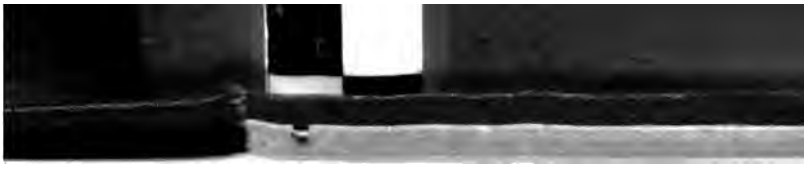
N.B.—Meaning, the spot where an individual in ghost-land makes a vow to Abasi, that if permitted to be born again amongst men, he will not live beyond a certain time. Hence of a man dying suddenly and causelessly, they say, "Akpa Akana Abasi," he dies in consequence of his vow to Abasi. And Akana, a promise or vow, comes to signify fate or destiny. This idea rests upon the African idea of death. They own, but generally with unwillingness, especially in the case of chiefs, to the Mkpa Abasi, or "the Death of God;" *i.e.*, the death of an old man in the course of nature: our "natural death." But Ndsisi (or Iyara) Mkpa, the death of youth (or manhood), is held sudden and unnatural, requiring to be explained by witchcraft, violence, or some such theory as the above.

332.

Usara Abasi.

The feast of God (i.e., *the yam feast*).

N.B.—Before eating the new yams, which when unripe are unwholesome, the head of the house and his family sacrifice and feast upon a victim slain in a small enclosure in the yard. Two or three weeks after this an Idem or Mumbo-Jumbo parades the town, and after the Egbo ceremony, all are allowed to enjoy their harvest. The first feast is called "Usara usuk-abia." And the yam-harvest is called the "Time of Plenty."



333.

Uso akanan nkpo oru esin usia omum fi.

Your father did so, and hence ill-fortune befalls you.

N.B.—"Uso," ill-luck generally, is here used of evil destiny inherited.

334.

Oba usiene mi.

He takes my return (i.e., *for something of his which I had lost or injured*).

335.

Ntantafion oyaha enyon; uyu nwan usua ayat ebe.

The stars (lit., *moon dust*) fill the sky; the voice of a woman given to hatred vexes her husband.

336.

Utai ete, Yak ebine imo ke akpa itok; ema ebine imo ke akpa itok, ndien emum imo.

The Iguana says, Let him be pursued in the first start; if he be pursued in the first start, he will be caught.

N.B.—Meaning, check the beginning of transgression.

337.

Utebeikpe.

A sum of money given by the successful party in a suit, to entertain "judge and jury." The practice is said to be extinct in Old Calabar, but to exist in Ibibio.

338.

Utimudi.

Ramming down the grave of a great man. A few weeks after interment a portion of the soil is taken up and supplied by the earth of ants' nests, which, when pounded, becomes exceedingly hard.

339.

Utin ekpok.

Literally, Lizard's sun (i.e., *early morning, before there is great heat*).

340.

Uton ekpedi enyin mbobop.

If the ear were an eye I would close it (i.e., ***I do not wish to hear***).

341.

Utu ke mbre edidok, ntie ke itie idem-mi.

I will remain alone rather than have a slanderer for my companion.

342.

Eyen unen ete, uye idem eka imo akan eba.

The chicken says, the warmth of his mother's body is better than milk.

N.B.—Meaning, the mite of the good man is better than the wealth of the wicked.

343.

Ikupke uye idem eka.

It does not feel the warmth of a mother's breast.

N.B.—Said of a motherless child when it dies.

344.

Uye owara enye ke idem; okutuk owo oru.

A bad influence comes from that man's body; you must not touch him.

N.B.—"Uye," properly "steam," here means the heat or an exhalation communicated from one body to another.

345.

Uyerisu.

A small "devil-house" (Nqueme), erected after a man's funeral, and containing all his finest articles, mostly broken, with a bed, a table, and a quantity of food for the use of the dead. The "Uyerisu" is also a table whereon articles of domestic use are put, and which is placed behind the deceased's house on the fourth day after burial. Those who assisted in the ceremony wash their faces, whence its name, at the same time praying to the ghost not to injure them, as they have "spread a table for him." The same custom is known in Dahome.

346.

Nka ke ura, nwap uyo; uyo usun urua obaha enem mi.

I went to the market and turned aside to eat Uyo (*a cake of fruit like mango*); Uyo of the market took me unwittingly with its sweetness.

N.B.—Meaning, I met by the way something so pleasant that I sat still forgetting or not caring to go further, or to carry out my purpose.

347.

Ikan ata fi inua afu adia ofop; owo asua fi uyu, afu aka ama.

The fire burned your mouth in eating the thing roasted; a man declares himself your enemy, and you go and make friends with him.

348.

Owobi ntan ke ebiet oru.

He grasps a handful of sand, and throws it at (*or towards*) a place, thereby renouncing intercourse with it.

349.

Wuk ubok 'no enye.

Salute a superior with Ubok (i.e., *humble yourself to him*).

N.B.—This is a humble and reverential salutation, made by turning the hands downwards, and touching the earth with the finger tips.

350.

Ekikere se eset ekerede owut eset.

Thought breaks the heart.

351.

Nyaya afu akamade mi ison.

I lay to heart the debt you owe me (i.e., *I do not wish to trust you any farther*).

352.

Ekikere ayana mi ke eset.

My thoughts evade me (i.e., *I cannot fix my thoughts on anything*).

353.

Ayayare uko.

He unmasks the hero (i.e., *shows him to be a coward*).

354.

Owo imum ayareset mkpa.

A quiet man gets angry even to death (i.e., *when once aroused*).

N.B.—So said Mohammed the Apostle: Defend us from the wrath of the mild in spirit.

355.

Abiya iyehe uyai ke ini utum.

Abiya does not dress herself in the working time.

N.B.—Abiya is a bird, the male of which has two long tail feathers during the breeding season (*the Whydah finch; Vidua Paradisiaca ?*) and the proverb is applied to one working in fine clothes.

356.

Eyere aran ye afu.

He smears himself with oil along with you.

N.B.—A brother may ceremoniously dissolve connection with another by drawing the fingers dipped in oil down his own and his brother's arms. On the other hand, fraternity, as has been seen, can be emphatically entered into. These are the rude inventions of an exceedingly sociable race.

357.

Eyet ekpe efep.

He renounces Egbo (i.e., *sells out of the institution*).

358.

Eyine mi nkpo.

He upbraids me with the gift which he gave to me.

N.B.—Said of an ungenerous man.

359.

Osibe idet ono Efik kpupru, ete, ima ikpa yak oyum imo.

He cut his hair and sent it to all Efik (Old Calabar), saying, if he died they should inquire concerning him (*i.e.*, as to the cause of his death).

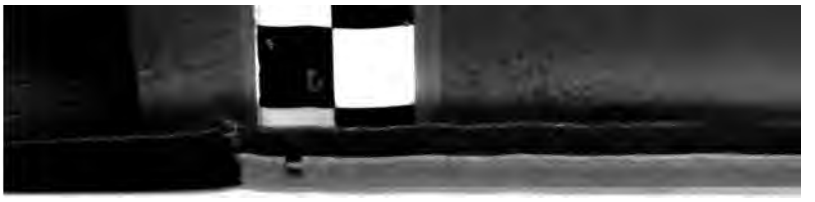
N.B.—A ceremony formerly performed by one who thought he was dying by witchcraft.

360.

Efik ebrutu anam idut; idut anam Efik atuak iton (*or* ata mfan).

Old Calabar can inflict any injury it pleases on the countries around; should any of these injure Old Calabar, it may go break its neck (*or eat roots*).

N.B.—Efik Eburutu, or Ebrutu, is the full title of the Efik, or Old Calabar country, but no one can explain the surname. Some conjecture it to have been the name of a man to whom the land in former times belonged.



361.

Idibi ke idem anam owo.

It is the stomach which rules the man.

N.B.—Meaning, Old Calabar feeds all the neighbouring tribes, and therefore has the supremacy.

362.

Idu nte ntan esien.

Idu (a town in Ibibio) is as the sand in the yard (*i.e.*, its men are numerous).

N.B.—This sentence is expressed by drum-beat when the town is summoned to war.

363.

Ama enwan nte Nkuo.

He loves fighting as much as Nkuo (a town or district towards the Adoni, Andoney, or S. Antonio river, between Old Calabar and the Bonny).

364.

Odu nana ke Ononkoni.

It is in Ononkoni (*i.e.*, it is impossible to get it).

N.B.—Ononkoni is the proper name of a place used in proverbs as a kind of Ultima Thule. So they say, It is farther distant than Ononkoni (*i.e.*, a very long way off).

365.

Asana osim Itu ye Uqua.

He has reached Itu and Uqua (*i.e., the uttermost parts*).

N.B.—The Itu and Uqua people are the farthest interior offshoots of Ibibio.

366.

Bon akam no Abasi.

Pray to Abasi (God): *lit.*, shout prayer, much after the fashion of the Pharisees.

N.B.—So, "Bon nye" is to cheer, after Old Calabar fashion, beating the mouth with the hand whilst uttering the sound.

367.

Akaran-Abasi.

The razor of God (*i.e., the swallow*).

368.

Akpa enyin idap.

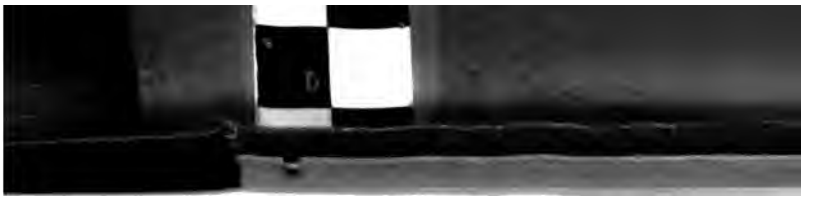
First eye of sleep (*i.e., first doze*).

369.

Kuno enye apka mi.

Do not give him any of my property.

N.B.—Thus a father disinherits his son.



370.

Akpa ekiko.

Lit., first cock (*i.e., cock-crowing time, called by the Anglo-African* "*Cokkerapeek*").

371.

Akpan idike iba idike ita; ama edi iba kiet otu unene.

The Akpan (*first-born son*) is not two or three; if two, one is from Ibo (*i.e., a slave*).

372.

Edueme enye unuak idion.

He anoints him (*lit., applies medicine by rubbing or drawing the finger-points over the place*) with Unuak idion (*blood, earth, salt, &c., kneaded together and smeared on the body at certain Egbo occasions*).

373.

Oduoi mkponison.

He draws down Mkponison (*i.e., marks himself by drawing lines with the juice of this rush-like plant, which stains the skin blackish.*

374.

Ika oru oduduro nte efe.

That word is bitter as Efe (*the fruit of a shrub*).

N.B.—So we say bitter as gall.

375.

Afu adia nkpo nte Ebe.

You eat like an Ebe (*a grub which burrows in the yam*).

N.B.—Meaning, you are gluttonous.

376.

Enye enyene ekpaha-ika ye ami.

He slanders me (*without naming me, so that I cannot take it up*).

N.B.—Ekpaha-ika is a word spoken to one, but applied to another.

377.

Etubum.

Father of canoe: ship captain (*applied to white traders of importance, as "Abon" to native chiefs*).

378.

Etu iyakita.

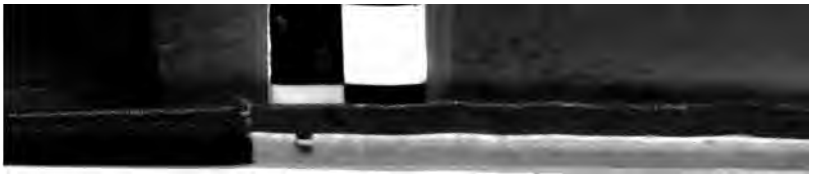
The stick with three fish (*i.e., the belt of Orion*).

379.

Mbiaekon nte mfan ikot.

Mbiaekon is as the leaves of the trees.

N.B.—See No. 362.



380.

Eyen akpara.

Son of a widow or harlot (*i.e., a bastard*).

381.

Unen edi ibet mi.

The flesh of the hen is a thing from which I abstain.

N.B.—"Ibet" is a vow of abstinence very common amongst Africans.

382.

Abia-idion ofri ifium.

The medicine-man blows his "Ifium" (*i.e., the toe of a large crab so used*).

383.

Ikon ebok.

Lit., Monkey-cough (*i.e., hooping-cough, which resembles the scream of a monkey, and is cured by monkey-soup*).

384.

Ikpa Ibibio.

Ibibio rope (*for climbing palm-trees, with two loops or stirrups for the feet. It is opposed to Ikpa mbudukom or Mbudukom rope, which passes round the body.*

385.

Ikpan-idan.

A gift to a widow by her next husband, who does not go through a regular ceremony. The present offered and received signifies that she becomes his wife.

386.

Enye enyene ime; owo an am enye eti nkpo, ododup, isiuruke uyu; anam idiok nkpo, ododup, isiuruke uyu.

He has great equanimity; if a man does him good he does not express his feelings; if bad he is still silent.

387.

Etie imo owo afu ofuro.

Connected with a great man, you will advance.

388.

Enye oduk.

He enters into the state of seclusion named Inam.

N.B.—At the order of the medicine-man, the invalid called by God shuts himself up with a single wife, and uses the same diet as a girl being fattened for marriage. When he again appears in public there is a feast.

389.

Ino ntantafion.

A thief star (*i.e., a falling star which appears to run off like a thief*).

390.

Ebre inuen.

He plays bird.

N.B.—Said of a certain conjuration, when the medicine-man puts something into his mouth and produces the note of a bird.

391.

Iquot okut edim, edim edi.

The frog calls for rain, rain comes.

392.

Isana ete, imo idiaka udia, idia ofun ke ikot.

The Isana (*a sloth-like animal*) says he eats no food, he eats the wind in the bush.

393.

Owo ison-ika.

A man true to his word (*i.e., firm in standing by what he says*).

394.

Itie ata kiet anam owo idap.

A sitting in one place makes a man sleep.

395.

Iton obio ke odon mi.

The longing for my native land seizes me (*i.e., I am home-sick*).

396.

Afu edi Itri.

You are an Itri (*proper name of inveterate smoker and snuffer of the olden time*).

397.

Itup.

A charm enabling the possessor to shoot any one unperceived by those present or the victim.

398.

Ifiok ofon akan-inyene.

Knowledge is better than riches.

399.

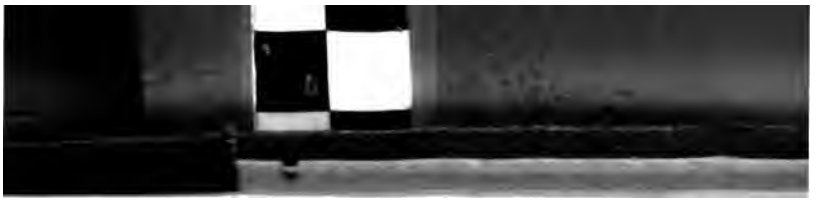
Owo anam ono fi, afu ete, imakan mi; ekpayah fi eyak mi, afu akpanam didie akan mi.

Somebody has done it for you, so you say you beat me; if you and I had been left to ourselves, how could you have beaten me?

400.

Ono ke mfon.

He gives it of his goodness (*i.e.*, *gratuitously*).



401.

Kebe ukebe.

Take an enema.

N.B.—A purgative is always so administered to "wash'um belly," as the Anglo-African phrase is.

402.

Eno.

Meaning "Comey," the equivalent to custom-house dues, paid by ships trading to Old Calabar.

403.

Okpu ndikpa mkpa oru.

He fails to die that death (*i.e., being pardoned, or having his penalty commuted*).

404.

Kukubara akpa.

A monstrous snake, stretching across the river and disturbing the water.

405.

Afu edi manka ekpe.

You are an alien of this Egbo society.

N.B.—Mankpa-ekpe is one who, having bought Egbo in another town, is free to walk through a strange place when Ekpe is in it, but cannot claim a share of entrance fees.

406.

Enye anam mi, ete, Mbap!

She insults me saying Mbap! (*or "Mbap akaya," an expression of contempt, with corresponding gesture*).

407.

Kpi mboni.

To cup.

N.B.—The Mboni is a small cup-like calabash: the natives have no other way of bleeding.

408.

Mo equak Mbuba.

They knock Mbuba (*i.e., broken pieces of calabash beaten together to drive disease from a house, after the individual who has died of it has been buried in the bush*).

409.

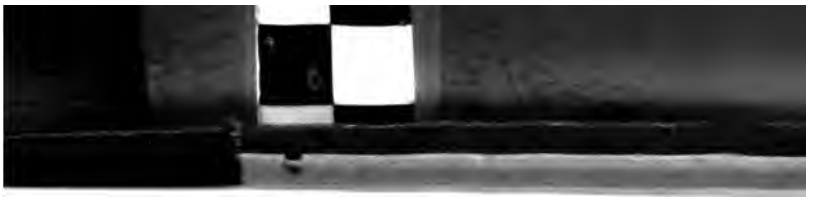
Mfut-enyin itakha mfut-enyin ibun.

Though he look so fierce, never mind, he can do nothing.

410.

Mkpikukik.

A yellow fish, said to invite the crocodile to swallow it as "good medicine," because it is found sticking in the crocodile's throat, and killing him with its spines.



411.

Onim idem esie ke mkpun-nkan.

He holds himself something superior.

N.B.—Mkpun-nkan—"exceeding greatness"—is used in rebuke or ridicule of an inferior who does not respect his superior.

412.

Monku.

Filth.

N.B.—Also unwashed clothes, cap, or clout, sent to a medicine-man to guide his divination when the person does not go himself. It is the practice of our modern mesmerists.

413.

Owo ndita.

One who has a craving for animal food (*apparently a disease in Equatorial Africa*).

414.

Nduokho.

A medicine charm thrown about the place to prevent quarrelling during a wake or a feast.

415.

Obiit.

The after-birth (*which is buried beside a palm-tree planted at the time, so as to grow with the child*).

416.

Obuma.

A thunderbolt (*a tree gum formed into mass by electric action in a split tree is often shown as the "bolt"*).

417.

Otu.

A shrub whose leaves serve to poison or stupefy fish.

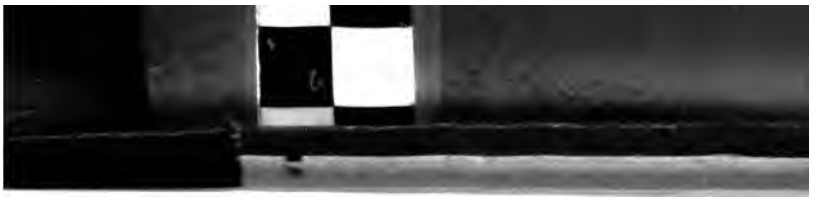
N.B.—This unsportsmanlike practice is general in Africa.

418.

Adadan owo.

A man not quite black—reddish.

N.B.—The three complexions in this part of Africa are yellow, red, and black, the latter perhaps being the rarest.



VARIA VARIORUM.

1.

When a man is compelled to forsake his country, he comforts himself by saying, "It is not only one place, that causes man to decay."

To express the very proper sentiment that persons should not be reproved or punished in the midst of trouble which they have culpably brought upon themselves, but afterwards, they cry, "Take your child out of the water before you slap him."

Speaking of a man of uncompromising courage and resolution, they observe "A leopard has one mind."

From "Cavalla Messenger," *February*, 1864.

2.

The following African cosmogony is so idiomatically told that I cannot resist introducing it, although it may appear out of place in a Book of Proverbs. The syncretic nature of its system, and the terse account of what

"Brought death into the world, and all our woes,"

will, I hope, recommend it to the reader.

Nke.

HOW THE WORLD WAS PEOPLED, AND HOW THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF THINGS CAME TO EXIST.*

Abasi rises up sits there, makes all things above,
Abasi adaha etie do, anam kpupru nkpo ke enyoñ,

makes all things below, with water, and bush,† and
anam kpupru nkpo ke isöng, ye möng, ye iköt, ye

the rivers and springs and beasts of the bush, he makes
akpa ye idïm ye unam iköt, anam

every kind of thing in the whole world. He makes not
kpupru oruk nkpo ke ofri ererimbüt. Inamke

man, men all dwell yonder with Abasi. Even man one
owo, owo kpupru ëduñ ko ye Abasi. Baba owo kiet

lives not here in the world, but beast of the bush and
iduhe ken ke ererimbüt, ibähäke unam iköt ye

fish which live in water and birds which we see
iyak emi ërure ke möñ ye inuen emi nyin ikutde

flying above, and many things other. I see not that I shall
ëfede ke enyöñ ye eriwak nkpo efen. Nque nte ndi-

* Specimen of the Language, from the Rev. Mr. Goldie's "Principles of Efik Grammar," Old Calabar, printed at the Mission Press, 1857.

† Forest.

count them all just now. But man even one existed not
batde mö kpupru idahemi. Edi owo ndümo kiet ikeduhe

in the world; all men dwelt yonder with Abasi in town
ke ererimbüt; kpupru owo ëkoduñ ko ye Abasi ke obio

his. Then the day that Abasi sits and eats, they meet
esie. Ekem usen orü Abasi etie adia, mö ëbüno

*there with him and Atai * his for uttering talk.*
do ye enye ye Atai esie ke esiöño neme.

At length Atai his calls him, he answers, she says to him,
Ekem Atai esie oküt enye, enye eyere, ete enye,

"The situation such as this they were situated here is good very
"Itie nte emi mimö etiede mi öföfön eti

then earth that existing there thou hast; heaven as this
ndien isöñ odü orude do afü enyene; enyöñ nte emi

they dwell in here thou hast; then that thou madest a whole
mimö induñde mi afu enyene; ndien ke afu ndi nam ofri

place so to keep, and if thou placest not man there,
ëbiët ntre 'nïm, ndien münïmke owo do,

it is not good; seek a way that thou canst place man there
ifönke; yüm usuñ nte onïmde owo do

* Head wife.

on earth that, so that they abide there kindle fire, so that
ke isöñ odü, kpañ mö ëtie do ëbara ikañ, kpañ
heaven be warm for cold abounded in heaven, because fire
enyöñ ofüp ke tuep ke awak ke enyöñ, korü ikañ
exists not on earth." Abasi is silent for a long time, at
miduhe ke isöñ." Abasi odüp tutututu,
length calls Atai, she answers, he says to her, "Kind of
ekem oküt Atai, enye eyere, ete enye, "Oruk
attempt that trying there passes him, and (if) he will
idümo odü odümodo do akan imö, inyuñ idi-
take man place there on earth, man abiding there and
da owo onïm do ke isöñ, owo etie do
dwelling there will measure himself with him, will try to
oduñ do odümo idem ye imö, odümo
speak say, 'He is as he,' he will try to speak say 'He
ndidähä ete 'Itie nte imö,' odümo ndidähä ete,
knows thing past him;' it is that you see stops him
Imöfiök nkpo akan imö; 'edi odü afü okutde akpande imö
to speak say, 'Man may go abide there on earth.'" Wife says,
ndidähä ete 'Owo ekete do ke isöñ.'" Ngwan ete,
"*He, man will not try. You having taken man to place*
enye, owo idümoke. Afu ama ada owo okonïm

there on earth, she will watch; even man one, will not see
do ke isöñ, imö iyekpeme; baba owo kiet idique

that he can compare himself with you. Having put man
nte odümo idem ye afü. Ama onïm owo

there, give up put in her hand, she will watch
do, yak sin ke ubök imö iyekpeme

man trying to pass you. She surpasses man that. The man
owo odümo ndi kan fi. Imö ikan owo orü. Owo

trying to think in heart, saying, 'He surpasses you,' she
odümo ndikere ke ësët, ete, 'Imö ikan fi,' imö

surpasses man that." Abasi assents, saying, "He dislikes
ikan owo orü." Abasi onyïme, ete, "Imö isuaha."

not (the scheme)."

At length Abasi takes male person one, gives,
Ekem Abasi emen ëren owo kiet önö

saying, "He shall dwell on earth. Man shall dwell on
ete, "Ediduñ ke isöñ. Erenowo ediduñ ke

earth, then it shall be it fits time of food,
isöñ, ekem eyedi ekem ini udia,

and they strike bell of food in heaven, man that must
ëmia nkanika udia ke enyoñ, ërenowo orü

ascend go eat thing, and having eaten done, descend and
ödök aka adia nkpo, adia ama, osukhäde

return to earth. It suits time of food of morning he goes
önyöñ isöñ. Ekom ini udia usenubok enye aka

on high to eat, that of mid-day he goes thither, that for
ke enyoñ akadia, eke uweměyu enye aka ko, eke

evening he goes thither, all food his he eats there."
mbubrëyu enye aka ko; kpupru udia esie enye adia ko."

Then Abasi speaks to him, man that, says, he must not wish
Ndien Abasi ödähä enye, ërenowo orü, ete, enye okuyüm,

saying, he may have food below; that if he have food
ete, inyene udia ke isöñ; ke enye inyene udia

below which he may eat, then he will not care any more for
ke isöñ eke adiade, ke enye idikereke aba

food his, will not wish any more saying, he will come on high
udia imo, idiyumke aba ete, idi ke enyöñ

to eat thing, and that it will result from that that man
ididia nkpo, ke eyetü orü owo

will forget him.
ifre imo.

Then wife addresses him says, "*He the man abiding*
Ekem ñwan ödähä enye ete, "Enye ërenowo nditie

so alone not having a wife is not good, for a man it is
ntre ikpöñ minyeneke ñwan ifönke, ërenowo
good to dwell with a wife, for a woman it is good with a
öfön nditie ye ñwan, ñwan öfön ye
man." * *He, Abasi, assents, saying to Atai his,* "*It is*
ërenowo." Enye, Abasi, onyïme, ete Atai esie, "Ekem
fitting so, but then, if he speak saying, '*he gives a wife*
ntre, ndien, imo idähä ete, 'inö ñwan
who shall abide there with the man,' *it will happen thence*
eke etie do ye ërenowo,' eyetü do
they shall be born and multiply and have children male and
mö ëmana ëwak enyene nditä iren ye
children female, so that they become many men, and when
nditä iban, otü do mö ëwärä eriwak owo, ndien
they grow many men they will forget him."
mö ëwärä eriwak owo eyefre imö."

Wife says to him, "*It is fitting so, then they go*
Ngwan ete enye, "Ekem ntre, ndien mö ëka
go abide there, but will not use in common a mat." † *He*
ëketie do, edi idibuanake mbri." Enye

* It is hard to say how much of this is borrowed from Europeans.
† That is to say, live as man and wife.

assents, gives the woman, saying she must abide there with
onyīme, önö ñwan, ete etie do ye
man on the earth. The woman goes sits there with man on
ëren ke isöñ. Ngwan aka etie do ye ëren ke
earth, and they dwell there. Abasi speaks to them says,
isöñ, mö ëduñ do. Abasi ödähä mö ete,
"They must not have in common a mat." They assent,
"Ekubuana mbri." Mö ënyīeme,
and keep each other company there; then at time of food
ëbüno do; ekem ini udia
they yo on high proper day the. The wife goes on high
mö eka ke enyöñ edikem usen orü. Ngwan aka ke enyöñ
with the husband, they go eat thing done and rise up.
ye ebe, ëka ëdia ñpo ëma ëdaha enyöñ.
Friend her female takes her and permits to walk so*
Ufan esie añwan ada enye ayak asaña ntre
with her and proceeds to the earth. She exclaims calls
ye enye ediwärä ke isöñ. Akpaha oküt
her "friend her female." She answers, she says to
enye "ufan imö añwan." Enye eyere, ete

* The female friend is here the tempter.

her, "*The kind of place this you abide in here*
enye, "Oruk ëbiët emi mbüfü ëtiede mi

seems to her as a very good place, then it happens how
etie imö nte ata eti ëbiët, ndien anam didie

you are lazy?" *Friend her female says to her,*
mbüfü edi ifu?" Ufan esie añwan ete enye,

"*How?*" *She says,* "*Ye say that* '*you don't*
"Ke didie?" Enye ete, "Ëdähä odïi 'mbufü mi-

wish a way that ye may provide food of yourselves.'
yumke usuñ nte enamde udia idem-mbüfü.'

The journey you travel thus so it distresses not
Isañ mbüfü ësañade ntem nte iyatke

you? So you will remain sitting eating even food
mbüfü? Nte edisuk etietie idia kpa udia

hand of man has not, which belongs to yourselves.
ubük owo inyeneke, eke idem-mbüfü.

"*Bush this* * *standing here I suppose belongs to Abasi,*
"Ikot emi adade mi nköm enyene Abasi,

and I believe Abasi speaks saying, '*You must abide here*
ndien nköm Abasi ödähä ete, 'Mbüfü etie mi

* Probably the Garden of Eden, derived from old Portuguese.

in bush this,' then it happens how you wish not a way for
ke iköt emi,' ndiën anam didie mbüfü miyümke usuñ nte

making a farm here that you may have food of your own?"
enamde iñwañ mi kpañ mbüfü enyene udia idemmbüfü ?"

Friend her female says to her, that it is truth you speak
Ufan esie añwan ete enye, ke edi akpanikä ke afü ödähä

at, but Abasi has spoken saying, "they must not wish
ndiën Abasi ama ödähä ete, "mimö ikuyüm

to have food of themselves here on earth, that he will give
ndiyene udia idem-mimö ken ke isöñ, ke imö eyenö

them food all time on high, then if they plant farm
mimö udia kpuprú ini ke enyöñ, ndien mimö itä iñwañ

and have food of themselves, it will be they will not care
inyene udia idemmö, nköm mimö idikereke

any more to go to food of Abasi above, and it will come
aba ndi ka udia Abasi ke enyöñ, eyetu

thence they will forget Abasi how he spake that
odü mimö ifre Abasi nte enye ödähäde ke

they will have food of themselves which they will eat also,
mimö idinyene udia idemmimö eke idiade inyuñ,

then also they care not for food of Abasi, and
ndien inyuñ ikereke udia Abasi, ndien

it must be if they do so Abasi will quarrel with them."
nköm mimö inam ntre Abasi eyetkähä ye mimö."

Friend her female says, "*He will not quarrel, he will say*
Ufan esie añwan ete, "Itäkhäke, enye odüp."

nothing." *At length at time of food they go above, friend*
Ekem ini udia mö ëka ke enyöñ, ufan

her female that takes matchet gives her saying,* "*Give*
esie añwan orü emen ofut enö enye ete, "No

your husband that he may clear a spot in face of yard
uberi etem ëbiët ke isü ësien

your that, and having cleared it done, you must tell her."
mbufu odü, ama etem ama, afü ödähä imö."

She assents; takes the matchet, gives the husband, husband
Enye onyïme; ada ofut, önö ëbe, ëbe

cuts down a spot in face of yard their, clears it done.
etem ëbiët ke isü ësiën mö, etem ama.

She tells friend her female, friend her says to her,
Enye ödähä ufan esie añwan, ufan esie ete enye,

"*Let it remain there and dry, then she will direct you how*
"Yak etie do asat, ndien imö iteme fi nte

* A cutting instrument.

you must do." *She assents.* *At length bush that they*
enamde." Enye onyïme. Ekem iköt orü

cut down lay there and dried all, friend her female takes
eketemde ana do asat kpupru, ufan esie añwan ada

fire from heaven, fetches her and says to her, "Kindle
ikañ ke enyöñ, ösök enye ete enye, "Tuene

fire thrust in bush that." *She kindles fire, the husband*
ikañ kïn ke iköt orü." Enye etuene ikañ, ebe

kindles, friend her female that kindles, and they take go
etuene, ufan esie añwan orü etuene, mo ëda ëka

go thrust into the bush, and the fire consumes all. Then friend
ekokïn ke iköt, ikañ ata kpupru. Ekem ufan

her female returns saying to her, "You having heard bell
esie añwan önyöñ ete enye, "Mbüfü ëma ëküp nkanika

of food come!" and she assents. *At length they hear bell*
udia edi!" enye onyïme. Ekem mö ëküp nkanika

of food, they go go eat thing done, and then they rise up.
udia, eka ekadia nkpo ëma, ekem ëdaha ke enyöñ.

Friend her female takes her and goes to the house, goes
Ufan esie añwan ada enye aka ufok,

gives her all kinds of food and fruit which they
ökönö enye kpupru oruk udia ye mbuñwüm nkpo emi

plant in farm with sugar cane and every kind of thing she
ëtäde ke iñwañ, ke mbökök ke kpupru oruk nkpo

gives her ; she takes returns and keeps. By and by friend
önö enye; enye ada önyöñ edinïm. Ekem ufan

her female comes and carries in hand a knife and hoe of
esie añwan edi akama iqua ye udök

planting and hoe for gathering up earth and comes thence
utä ye udök unyukhä otü edi

and calls her and the husband, takes them goes to place
oküt enye ye ëbe, ada mö aka ke ëbiët

that they had put fire. They take sweep the clearance
orü ekekïmde ikañ. Ekada ekpori otuk

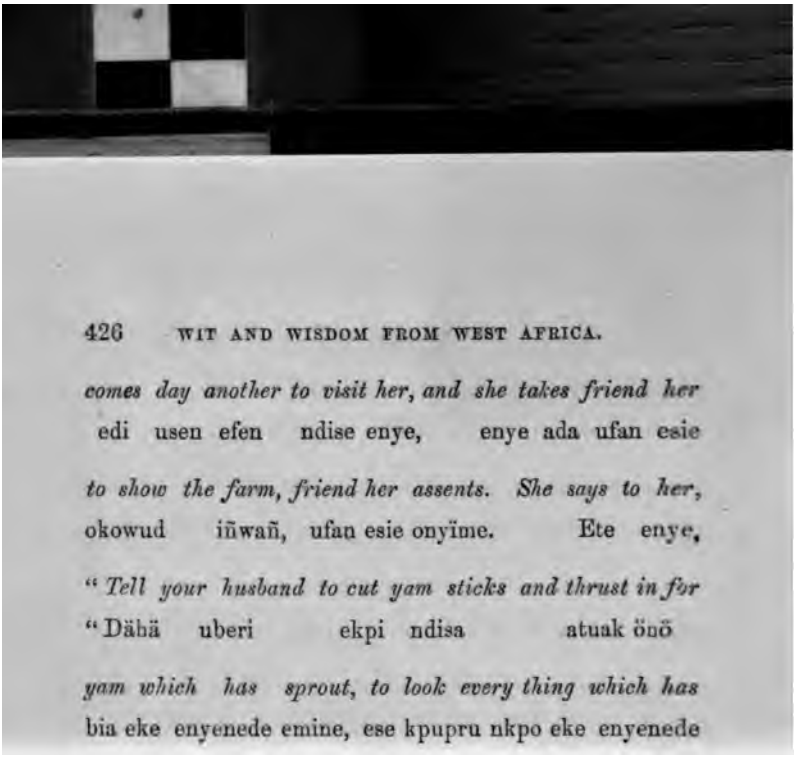
all and pick up food that they divide and plant there,
kpupru etañ udia orü ësiak ëtä do,

they plant with fruit that. All return come sit together
ëtä ye mbuñwüm nkpo orü. Kpupru ënyöñö edibüno

in house, then at time of food they go eat thing done and
ke ufök, ekem ini udia mö ëka ëdia nkpo ëma

return. At length they delay not, thing every springs, yam
ënyöño. Ekem idañkedañ, nkpo kpupru otïbe, bia

shoots forth sprouts, all become large. Friend her female
otïbe emïne kpupru ewoño ikpö. Ufan esie añwan



comes day another to visit her, and she takes friend her
edi usen efen ndise enye, enye ada ufan esie

to show the farm, friend her assents. She says to her,
okowud iñwañ, ufan esie onyïme. Ete enye,

"*Tell your husband to cut yam sticks and thrust in for*
"Dähä uberi ekpi ndisa atuak önö

yam which has sprout, to look every thing which has
bia eke enyenede emine, ese kpupru nkpo eke enyenede

sprout thrust in sticks give. He assents. At length
emine atuak ndisa önö. Enye onyïme. Ekem

husband thrusts in sticks gives all food that and
ebe atuak ndisa önö kpupru udia orü ye

every thing that. Then day that they go on high
kpupru nkpo orü. Ekem usen orü mo ëka kenyoñ

go eat food of evening having returned they come to the
ëkadia udia mbubrëyu ëma ënyoño ëdi ke

house; she, the woman spreads mat her and enters, and lies
ufok; enye, ñwan ebri mbri esie oduk, ana

down as she used to lie every day; the husband lies on
nte akam anade kpupru usen; ebe ana ke

his as he is wont to lie every day. It reached to the
esie nte akam anade kpupru usen. Osïm ke

middle of night very, the husband rises and follows wife,
ufŏt okunëyu ibibia, ebe adaha etiene ñwan,

the wife speaks to him says, "Abasi will quarrel with
ñwan ödähä enye ete, "Abasi eyetäkhä ye

them." He says, "He will not quarrel, then should he quarrel
mimö." Enye ete, "Itäkhäke, ndien okponyuñ ötäkbä

let him quarrel, but they have not a way that they shall do
yak otäkbä nköm, mimö inyeneke nte edinamde

and escape the quarrel of Abasi. It was so Abasi had
ibähäke utök Abasi. Nköm Abasi ökö-

spoken, saying, they must not wish say, they will have food
dähä, ete, mimö ikuyüm ite, inyene udia

on earth, then this was so, they planted farm, and
ke isöñ, ndien emi nköm, mimö imotä iñwañ, ndien

that they had planted farm it was they spoiled commands
odü ëma ikötä iñwañ nköm, mimö imabiat mbet

of Abasi, then let them keep on spoil all." The wife is
Abasi, ndien yak mimö isuk ibiat kpupru." Ngwañ

*silent for a long time and consents.**
odüp tutututu, onyïme.

* This resembles the Moslem myth, that Adam knew his wife after eating of the forbidden plant—wheat.

Day dawns and month passes over wife; wife conceives
Eyu esiere öñöñ ebe ñwan; ñwan emen idibi

just very day that they did meet there so as wife and
kpasuk usen orü mö eyebobüno do ntre nte ñwan ye

husband. Then day that friend her female comes, comes
ëbe. Ekem usen orü ufan esie añwan edi, edi-

speaks to her, says, "Come they go to the farm." They go
däbä enye, ete, "Di mimö ika iñwañ" Mö ëka

farm; friend her female took stick to dig up, comes says
iñwañ; ufan esie añwan akada ëtü idök, edi ete

to her, "Let them try yet how they can scrape soil,
enye, "Yak mimö idümo kaña nte ifetde isöñ,

look the thing which they had planted here, it is how
ise nkpo emi mimö ikötäde mi, etie didie

now." She assents; they scrape ground un-
adañ emi." Enye onyïme; mö ëfet isöñ ëbuk-

bury the yam and keep it. Friend her female says she
bäle bïa ënim. Ufan esie añwan ete enye

must lift, she lifts and returns to the house, friend her
emen, enye emen önyöñ ufok, ufan esie

shows her how to do it all. Then she gives her
eteme enye nte enamde kpupru. Ekem önö enye

pepper, gives her salt, gives her every thing of food,
ntukön, önö enye inuñ, önö enye kpupru nkpo udia,

and pot and spoon and calabash and mortar and stone (to
ye ësu ye ikpañ ye iko ye uruñ ye itiat

grind) pepper; then friend her female goes. They
ntukön; ekem ufan esie añwan önyön. Mö

sit together there so till wife boils yam and they eat,
eyebobüno do ntre tutu ñwan eteme bia odü mö ëdia,

(she) and husband. Sun declines, they spread mat enter
ye ëbe. Eye okut, ëbri mbri ëduk

lie on mat one, (she) and husband, they lie not any more
ëna mbri kiet, ye ëbe, mö iñana aba

differently as they used to lie. The wife went no more
nsio nsio ëkam ënade. Ngwan ikaha aba

to food at town of Abasi. When husband went, Abasi asks
udia ke obio Abasi. Eyedi ëbe aka, Abasi obüp

him saying, "Wife thy lives where?" He says wife his*
enye ete, "Nwan fü oru moñ?" Enye ete ñwan imö

is sick. He did not tell Abasi saying wife his
ödönöño. Enye isianke Abasi ete ñwan imö

* Much like the tale of Adam's nakedness.

was pregnant. He was afraid, for Abasi had spoken to
oyoyümo. Efehe, korü Abasi öködähäde

them saying, "They must not do thing so." Then wife his
mö ete, "Ekunam nkpo ntre." Ekem ñwan esie

counts month the one proper month of birth in which she
abat öñöñ ada ekekem öñöñ uman emi enye

should have child, then she sits down and bears a son.
edimande, ekem enye osärä aman ëren.

They live together there so; in no long time wife also
Mo ëbübüno do ntre; ibïgike bïgi ñwan onyuñ

conceives and bears a daughter. They live together so,
emen idïbi aman añwan. Mö eyebüno ntre,

and go not any more to food at town of Abasi. At length
ikaha aba udia ke obio Abasi. Ekem

he father of children these, because it was that he had
enye ëte nditä orü, korü edide nte enye ama

known books, when children his were born so he takes book
ofiok ñwed, nditä esie ëmana ntre enye ada ñwed orü

the and teaches the children. Then day that Abasi calls Atai
ekpep nditä. Ekem usen orü Abasi oküt Atai

his, addresses her saying, "You see the word this he spoke
esie, ödähä enye ete, "Omokut ikä emi imö iködähä

to you, don't you see how man has forgotten him here?"
fi, uque nte owo efrede imö mi?"

Atai says to him, "Never mind for that, leave the thing
Atai ete enye, "Dahadü keset, yak nö

with her, she will watch." At length Atai his sends death,
in.ö, iyekpeme." Ekem Atai esie ödöñ mkpa,

death comes, kills husband of woman the and woman the,
mkpa edi, owüt ëbe ñwan orü ye ñwan orü,

they persons both die in day one and leave the children. Then
mö owo mbiba ëkpaña usen ik et ësuk nditä. Ekem

the children remain there a long time, at length small thing
nditä ëtie do tutututu, ekem ekpri nkpo

even a little comes not, important thing occurs not, any
esisit idike di, akpan nkpo idike di,

thing which they should quarrel about, but they quarrel.
nkpo eke mö ëkpötäkhäde, mö ëtäkhä.

Atai of Abasi made dispute this follow them and death and
Atai Abasi anam utök emi etiene mö ye mkpa ye

*every evil thing because father their had done evil thing.**
kpupru idōk nkpo korü ëte mö akanamde idiök nkpo.

It happened day that both eldest son and second daughter
Ekem usen orü ye nkpan ye uduñwan

and eldest daughter and second son they quarrel and fight;
ye adiaha ye udä mö ëtäkhä ëñwana;

then eldest son and second daughter pick up all thing
ekem nkpan ye uduñwan ëtañ kpupru nkpo

of book of father their and all books of father their and
ñwed ëte mö ye kpupru ñwed ëte mö ye

all things which father their was wont to use after the
kpupru nkpo eke ëte mö akam anam ëkade

custom of the white man.† They pick up all run off and
ke idü makara. Mö ëtañ kpupru ëfeñe

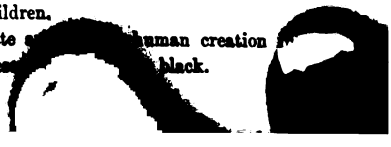
into the forest a long way and settle in the thick part of
ëduk iköt tutututu ëkatak ke mbaba ësët

the forest. The eldest daughter and second son pick up
iköt. Adiaha ye udä ëtañ

hoe for planting and hoe for hoeing and cutlass and every
udōk utä ye udök unyukhä ye ikpanam ye kpupru

* Like the disputes of Adam's children.

† The white man being a separate [illegible] human creation [illegible] general African opinion, is here a dee[illegible] black.



kind of thing which pertains to thing of plantation, run off
oruk nkpo eke asañade ke nkpo iñwañ, ëfeñe

depart and settle in midst of forest the very also. The
ënyöñ, ëkatak ke uföt iköt ibiba nko.

eldest daughter settles there with second son, and second
Adiaha etie do ye udä, udä

son takes her marries and keeps her as wife his. The
ada enye ödä onïm nte ñwan esie.

eldest son yonder in quarter that he ran and went off to
Akpan ko ke edem odü enye efehede önyöñ

also takes second daughter marries and keeps as wife his.*
onyuñ ada uduñwan ödä onïm nte ñwan esie.

The first daughter and second son live together there in
Adiaha ye udä ëbüno do ke

place that they ran went to settle there and have many
ëbiët odü mö ëfehede ëka ë.ie do enyene ëriwak

children, both children male and children female. The
nditä ye nditä irenowo ye nditä iban.

eldest son and second daughter also have in like manner in
Akpan ye uduñwän ënyuñ ënyene ntre ke

* They marry like the sons and daughters of Eve.

spot that they ran went to. The eldest daughter and
ëbiët orü mö efeñede ëka. Adiaha ye

second son remain so do work of farm and clearing which
udä etie ntre ënam utüm iñwañ ye ntem orü

they cleared and cutting which they cut and they put fire in
mö ëtemede ye okpüt orü mö ëkpide, ëkïmde ikañ ke

farm and clear the place burnt. That makes them black and
ìñwañ ëkpöride otuk. Odü anam mö ëbre

they turn black men. The eldest son and second daughter
ëkabade mbubït owo. Akpan ye uduñwan

these are as those who do kind of work that causes them
orü edide nte mö ënamde oruk utüm otü esin mö

they dont get black. They stand become white men. Thus we
ëkubre. Mö ëda ëdi mfia owo. Nte emi nyïn

live together here, both black men and makara are of mother*
ibunode mi, ye mbubït owo ye makara ëdi ëka

one and father one, but we black men are people of eldest
kiet ye ëte kiet, ëdi nyïn mbubït owo ëdi iköt adiaha,

daughter, white men are people of eldest son who fled and
mfia owo ëdi iköt akpan emi ekefehede önyöñ

* White men.

went to the bush, for it is thing of book of father their
iköt, kedi nkpo ñwed ëte mö

that eldest son picked up and ran off makes makara know
orü akpan akatañde efehe esin makara öfiök

book, also it is thing of work of farm of father their that
ñwed, onyuñ edi nkpo utüm iñwañ ëte mü orü

eldest daughter picked up makes us black men understand
adiaha akatañde esin nyïn mbubït owo ifiök

work of plantation. She, the Atai of Abasi, did not lose
utüm iñwañ. Enye, Atai Abasi, iduökke

head for word as she spoke with husband. That makes man
ibuüt ke ikä nte enye öködähäde ye ebe. Orü esïn owo

born into the world seek to stand up in greatness of power,
amana ke ererimbut oyüm ndidaha mkpün uböñ,

also he makes bold the eye and cares not even thing one.
önyuñ ösöñ ënyïn mikerekekere baba nkpo kiet.

She, Atai, forbears for a time; great man that will not consent
Enye, Atai, eme tutu; akan owo orü minyïmeke

to renounce custom that, she kills. She causes death this
ndiduök idü orü, enye owüt. Enye esïn mkpa emi

which all men die here. Atai speaks saying, "Let
kpupru owo ëkpañade mi. Atai odähä ete, "Yak

man not multiply too much in the world; he must not
owo okuwak akaha ke ererimbut;

live life ever ever; that if man live life ever ever in the
okodu uwem nsi nsi; ke owo odu uwem nsi nsi ke

world he will multiply too much." From that she forgets*
ererimbut eyewak akaha. Otü orü imö ifreke

not word as she had promised given husband her. There-
uyu nte imö ikööwöñöde inö ëbe imö. Korü

fore it is as Atai has uttered voice given husband, saying,
edide nte Atai ama öduök uyu önö ëbe, ete,

" She will not that man dwell in the world ever ever," she
" Imö idinyïmeke owo oduñ ke ererimbut nsi nsi," enye

makes man die. Though she gives man he dwells
esin owo ëkpaña. Ekpedi nte enye önöde owo ediduñ

in the world, she takes us away, for if men knew not how
ke ererimbut, osio nyin efep, ke owo ikpöfiökke nte

they were situated some men would turn beasts in forest.
ëtiede, usuk owo ëkpakabade unam ke iköt.

* This is a purely African idea, partly underlying human sacrifice and destruction of life by poison ordeal, twin-murder, &c.

VII.

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS AND IDIOMS

IN

THE MPANGWE (FAN) TONGUE.

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS AND IDIOMS IN THE MPANGWE (FAN) TONGUE.

THE following specimens are taken from a sketch of the Grammar and Vocabulary painfully collected during a year's isolated residence at Nenge-Nenge, on the Gaboon River, by the Rev. Messrs. Preston and Adams, of the American Mission.* My friend Mr. Winwood Reade, author of "Savage Africa," was allowed to make a MS. copy, from which I have borrowed.

The Mpangwe is an interesting race. They were introduced to Europe by M. Paul du Chaillu, under the name of "Fans," and his account of their terrible cannibalism found many questioners. Mr. Reade and I both subsequently visited the tribe, and found only the average traces of anthropophagy. Its habitat is on the upper course of the Gaboon River, and it is separated from the seaboard by the kindred Mpongwe, called by the French "les Gabons." The latter, however, is a race rapidly becoming extinct, and the Mpangwe must then temporarily take its place.

* I believe that a sketch of the Grammar and Vocabulary of the Mpangwe dialect has been printed by the Mission Press, Gaboon River.

To borrow Mr. Preston's remarks, "This language is remarkably minute and flexible. New words appear to have been coined in abundance to name new things, or old words have been stretched to meet them. There are few words for the feelings—none to express lofty ideas, refined sentiments, or even commonplace virtues. It is essentially a physical language—a language of the woods and fields, the prairies and rivers; of man's body—his sports, his occupations, his necessities. We learn from this dull catalogue that the people are close observers of Nature, or rather of Nature's clothing. This language, terse and rugged as the naked savages by whom it is used, is but slightly different from the languages of the coast. The soft-spoken Mponge (Gaboon tribe) have it softened, lengthened, and disguised; but the roots are in common. This process of changing the language is to be observed in its first stage in the 'Dikele' (the dialect of the Bakalai). Cut most Dikele words in half, and take the first half—you have the Mpange."

1.

Wa ta sue.

You have become naked (i.e., *you have nothing*).

2.

Kaba a woha abuh.

The goat feels panting (i.e., *is weary*).

N.B.—The more civilized Mpangwe declares that the Bushmen cannot eat goats or fowls, which they look upon as fellow-townsmen, and call the former "brother." They rarely, however, refuse to sell their "brethren."

3.

A ei (*ne*) nzam nyul.

He is not with sweetness of body (i.e., *he is unkind*).

4.

Yumiki le ki.

Make it strong with strength (i.e., *very strong*).

5.

A ni anuh avol.

He is with a sharp mouth (i.e., *he talks fast*).

6.

Bikangbi jo.

Clouds of sun (i.e., *white clouds*).

7.

A mana lom mvon.

He has sent the curse.

N.B.—Meaning, he has repeated the formula over a boy to blast the thief.

8.

A yem malu osu, a yem malu onvus.

He knows the days before and he knows the days behind.

9.

Jo da ziba.

The sun grows dark (i.e., *sets*).

10.

Mina moba nyat oyoh.

You sit above a cow (i.e., *ride*).

11.

Kal zano.

My sister.

N.B.—A male calls her so, and a female calls her brother "Ndoma zam"—my brother. But when a male speaks of his brother, or a female of her sister, they say "child of my father," or "child of my mother."

12.

Mayah mana masi onyenh.

This rum has no Onyenh (i.e., *is watered*).

N.B.—"Onyenh" is the bitter bark which makes palm wine intoxicating.

13.

A lom mokal.

He sends curses.

N.B.—Alluding to a form of curse, in which a kind of dance is executed.

14.

Bapika!

A word said when a woman wishes her child to get up on her back.

MISCELLANEOUS PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS.

MISCELLANEOUS PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS.

1.*

My musket after use needs oiling.

N.B.—Recommending the punishment or acquittal of one accused.

2.

Give a dog a bone, and he will break and eat: so will we the town of our enemy.

3.

Goat's blood is goat's blood.

N.B.—*Anglicè*, in the vulgar, "trumps," *i.e.*, we knew all that before.

4.

What I speak in the debate, I will enact in the field: there is a fish in the river called Pataseh.

N.B.—This animal has a natural protection, and is able to defend itself.

* The following nineteen are borrowed from "Dahomey and the Dahomans," being the journals of two missions to the King of Dahomey, and residence at his capital in the years 1849 and 1850. By Frederick E. Forbes, Commander, R.N., F.R.G.S., &c. 2 vols. London: Longmans, 1851.

5.

Let a man stuff himself at night, and he is heavy in the morning: that man is a fool.

6.

If one partly destroys a country, one is not likely to return in open day, but will take advantage of the darkness of night.

N.B.—Alluding to the Dahoman system of perpetual surprises.

7.

Where war is, there the drum will be.

8.

The readiest way to sell, is to cry your goods through the streets.

9.

In times of peace the warrior's eye roves in all directions: in war, it is fixed upon one point.

N.B.—Meaning, "Force should be concentrated."

10.

We are the king's sandals.

11.

Amou entered a room in which lay a corpse: he lifted the sheet, and was asked why? "Because," he replied, "I am anxious to go where that man is gone." Let us go there, or conquer the enemy!

N.B.—The Dahomans, with other African pagans, believe—not

as Commander Forbes supposes, "in a transmigration of souls, and that the dead pass into a happier state"—that after death the ghost can return at times to earth, and do good or evil to those living. Thus the rich take their favourite wives and a few slaves with them, some of the wives being often voluntary sacrifices—in fact, suicides.

12.

Although a snake casts away beads and sheds its skin, it cannot change its colour; nor can I my word.

N.B.—Dahomans believe that the Popo beads are the produce of a snake, whereas other Africans consider them the vertebræ of reptiles. They are dug up in the interior, where they are worth their weight in coral. Imitation has hitherto failed; and it is still disputed whether they came originally across the continent from Egypt, or were buried in early times by the Venetians.

13.

Beans, though dried in burning fire, can, by introducing the finger, be taken out and eaten.

14.

Fetish men never initiate the poor.

15.

Spitting makes the belly more comfortable, and the outstretched hand will be the receiving one.

16.

When the wolf goes abroad, the sheep must fly.

17.

Let the king grant war speedily; let not our energies be damped. Fire cannot pass through water!

18.

In the days of our ancestors the white trader brought good articles. A musket then lasted twenty years; now, three.

N.B.—Upon which Commander Forbes remarks: "I doubt much if this was not a *double entendre*; meaning, that formerly a musket would be of little use in Dahomey, but now its use is universal. All these sayings, as will be seen, are in abstruse parables."

19.

If the leopard kills her prey, does she not feed her young? If the hind brings forth her young, does she not nibble grass for it?

1.*

Edimo.

An apparition, or ghost of the dead.

N.B.—The ideas of the Isubu, or Bimbia people, respecting "spirit," spiritual state, and life after death, are, as usual amongst Africans, vague in the extreme. They sometimes offer food and drink to the Bidimo (plural of Edimo), and by "Bidimo" they mean their dead friends and relatives. Sheol or Hades—the Land of the Dead—is also elliptically called Bidimo; the full phrase being

* The following thirteen are taken from a dictionary of the Isubu tongue, printed at Bimbia, by the Baptist Mission, in 1846—47. The Isubu country, by Europeans known as Bimbia, lies at the foot of the Camaroons mountains, and along the banks of a river of the same name. In 1841, the missionaries established there a village called Jubilee. The language is, for Africa, extensively understood by the Ba-kwiri, or Bush races of the mountains, and by the tribes extending north-west to the Rumbi R., and eastward to Bavi and Abo. It is cognate with the Dualla of the Camaroons R., and through Malimba it meets southwards the languages of the Congo class.

"Ekombo ya Bidimo" (Country of the Dead), opposed to "Ekombo ya Bawenya" (Land of the Living). Every person is said to go to Bidimo after death; though the people have no definite ideas respecting future reward and punishment, they look upon it as an undesirable place. In the Dualla, or Camaroons dialect, the word Bidimo means apparitions, of which the Rev. Mr. Saker says, "Indistinctly, too, we trace *Bidimo* to the *Schirim* of the Hebrews, and the *fauns* and other woodland deities of more modern days over whom Pan presided. Whatever may be the knowledge the natives possess of their own superstitions, there is no doubt as to the *Panic* which a supposed sight of 'Edimo' creates, nor the terror a mere report inspires. Sacrifices, too, are made to Edimo, who is supposed, in some way or other, to preside over the wilderness and the farm, as Njengu presides over the waters." Finding no term for Hell, the missionaries Isubuized "Heli." For Heaven, however, there is nothing better than "Loba," which means "the starry expanse."

2.

Ilemba.

P. N. of an evil spirit who, unless prevented by charms, has the power of injuring and killing people. Men and women are accused of possessing Ilemba, and must prove their innocence by a draught of the poison-water called "Kwabe." If this ordeal prove fatal, the accused are guilty; if it is ejected, it is a sign of innocence. Almost every mishap, whether it relates to person or property, is attributed to the evil influence of Ilemba. It is the office of the Dikangga (or Diviner) to detect those possessed of this power, and the discovery is made by looking into a cup of water. Thousands of people from the interior will resort to a well-known diviner; and the evils produced by this system of witchcraft can be understood only by referring to the state of Europe before the days of Wierus and his followers. One possessed by a demon is called "Motu wa Ilemba" (a man of Ilemba—

a devil-man). The ideas of the Isubus being also misty upon the subject of a "devil," the missionaries obliged them with "Devili;" opposed to "Obasi"—in the plural Baobasi—(God).

3.

Mulu.

The breath of the mouth; opposed to "Wei," that of the stomach. "Wei" is that upon which life depends,—the breath of life (the Hebrew "Rauh," Arab "Ruh"); consequently, Europeans use it as "spirit." When a person dies, the Isubus say, "Wei i mafatea" ("the life's breath is broken loose"). So the Latins say, "*Anima est quâ vivimus, animus quo sapimus.*"

4.

Molenga.

Heart,—the word used by translators for "conscience." Thus, "O sa beni molema o Dibungga:" literally, "Hast thou no heart in thy belly?" *i.e.*, "Have you no conscience?"

5.

Disua.

A secret compact amongst the Isubus, entered into when some murderous or warlike deed is to be performed. The parties meet together in the woods, and, clearing a spot of weeds, sit down to take counsel. During the conference, a large pot is placed upon the fire, and in it a stone, which is supposed, superstitiously, to become, by cooking, as soft as a plantain. The stone is then cut with a knife, and a small piece is swallowed by each person. Hence the idioms, "Ife disua" ("to cook disua"); and,

as Mimbo, or palm-wine, poured upon the ground, sometimes forms part of the ceremony, "Soa disua" ("to pour forth disua"). Each person of the council having swallowed his allowance, binds himself to do or to abet the deed proposed. Nothing but death nullifies the covenant; and though years may elapse before the "dreadful thing" is effected, all consider themselves bound by an awful oath to carry out their design when opportunity offers. None but persons of most approved character may take part in this council, nor are women and young people permitted to be present.

6.

Dibombe.

The name of a statute amongst the Isubu and throughout the adjacent districts. It originated in a dream. One Mofa ma Ile, a man residing in the Ekimbi district, inland and to the north of Bimbia, dreamed, some few years ago, that he saw a crowd of people long since dead. They warned him of the evil of taking away life unjustly, and told him that whenever a man committed murder (*in another town*) he was to be apprehended by the people of his own town, and delivered up to be hanged. On the other hand, if he escaped, his innocent relatives and friends were not, according to the old custom of the country, to be destroyed. Also, if one man wounded another, the offender himself, and not his family, was subject to the *lex talionis*. After the vision, Mofa assembled the Bushmen from the surrounding district, and related to them what he had seen: hence arose the law called "Dibombe," which has had a salutary influence in checking manslaughter.

7.

Jienggu, *or* Njengu.

The name of a deity who is venerated by the free men of Isubu. He is said by the missionaries to have, in many respects, the same rank at Isubu that Neptune held in Rome. He is a water-god, walking with feet reversed from the human position—the toes being behind. Sacrifices are made to him: these and other incantations often precede fishing operations. There is an initiation in his name, and the brotherhood meet in neat little huts built outside the villages. Women are also eligible, but not slaves. Those who are being initiated wear about their necks and waists the herb Mbouggolu, which is used as a tea in bowel complaints: hence, a child born during the initiation of its mother, is called "Mokutu wa Mbouggolu." These children are supposed often to die of dropsy; hence that disease is called "Nyambe na Jienggu."

8.

Motu a Nggangga.

A cunning man, *i. e.*, a doctor. Amongst the Isubu, as with the Egyptians, those who practise the healing art are called after the diseases which form their specialties. They think—and with great truth—that one brain is incompetent to comprehend the multifarious diseases of the human frame. Hence, there are at Isubu "Batu ba bola ekoseri," or cough doctors; "Batu ba bola betanda," or worm doctors; "Batu ba bola dibumbi," or dropsy doctors; and so forth. The latter disease seems very prevalent. Besides the name above given, it is called, in the case of children, "Nyambe ya ewake" (the baboon's disease), on account of the supposed resemblance of the sufferer to that hideous animal.

9.

Moesi.

Mid-day. The Isubus do not divide the day into hours, but into three epochs, called "Idiba," "Moesi," and "Ebia moko." The term "Epoke" (plural "Bepoke") denotes the space of time which one of these three divisions contains. Thus, the earlier hours of the day—our morning—would be called "Epoke ya Idiba bunya" (the morning division). From 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. it would be "Epoke ya moesi," or simply "Moesi" (light), as this noon division includes the brightest hours of the day. From 4 p.m. till night it is called "Epoke ya ebia-moko" (the evening division). The missionaries have been compelled to introduce "Eora" (an hour).

10.

Itambo.

Chewed food generally. The sort is specified by an affix, as "Itambo la meke" (chewed plantain). The unclean custom of chewing food, and feeding children with it, is universally practised at Bimbia.

11.

Sombo ya mbori.

A goat with long hair. Amongst the islanders of Bimbia a person that does not possess a goat of this description, is not allowed to put his harp on his shoulder whilst playing it: he must hold it down, or put it on his knees, and pay a fine for transgressing the rule.

12.

Ba tia Nggondo, *or* **Ba taku Nggondo.**

They beat or shell the Uggondo-seed.

N.B.—Meaning the Pleiades. "Uggondo" is a small white seed,

like that of the orange, but flatter, the kernel of which has been eaten, when the outer shell has been beaten or picked off. It would seem that the Pleiades present, to the minds of the Isubus, the idea of the shell of the Uggondo beaten and scattered over the ground.

13.

Di bi 'ma itaki l' akai o ifula iyokise la inona, nggeri, i aka ilangga.

We think that poverty surpasses in desire the torments of covetousness beyond computation.

N.B.—Less literally, "We think poverty infinitely desirable compared with the torments of covetousness."

1*.

Dibobe.

Sky, or firmament. The notion prevails that there is a something spread on high as a piece of cloth is extended, or as a spider stretches its web, and the "Dibobe" covers the whole arc of heaven.

2.

Ekali.

The religion or superstition of the country, now applied by the missionaries to the faith of the "Kalati a Loba" (Book of the Firmament, or Bible), which they regard as having taken the place of the natives' "Ekali."

* The following five are taken from a vocabulary of Dualla language for the use of missionaries and others, printed at Camaroons, Western Africa, Mission Press, 1862, and attributed to the Rev. Alfred Saker, of the Camaroons (Baptist) Mission. The Dualla, or Diwalla, are the people of the Camaroons river extending for thirty miles from the sea, along the river and into the interior. The people are numerous, they trade in palm oil, and are not to be trusted. Their language is one of the multifarious South-African dialects around them.

3.

Dia da modi.

The female (*i.e. the left, because the inferior*) hand.

4.

Ngambi.

The great idol or god of the country. All the rites are addressed to it, but what it may have been originally, no one knows. The people, unable to assign to it form or place, believe that it resides wherever the Ngambi-man (or Fetisheer) locates it with his spells. Thus, a stick, a leaf, or any other thing selected for the occasion, has eyes to see, and ears to hear, and can communicate intelligence to its priest. Hence the dread, the sacrifices, and the offerings of these people.

5.

Nyambe.

A word difficult to explain. It seems to be a name for the Deity, different from Ngambi, which is owned to be earthly. Nyambe is of heaven—the great worker in the earth amongst men; and to him are attributed all personal disasters, family bereavements, and similar misfortunes.

THE END.

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